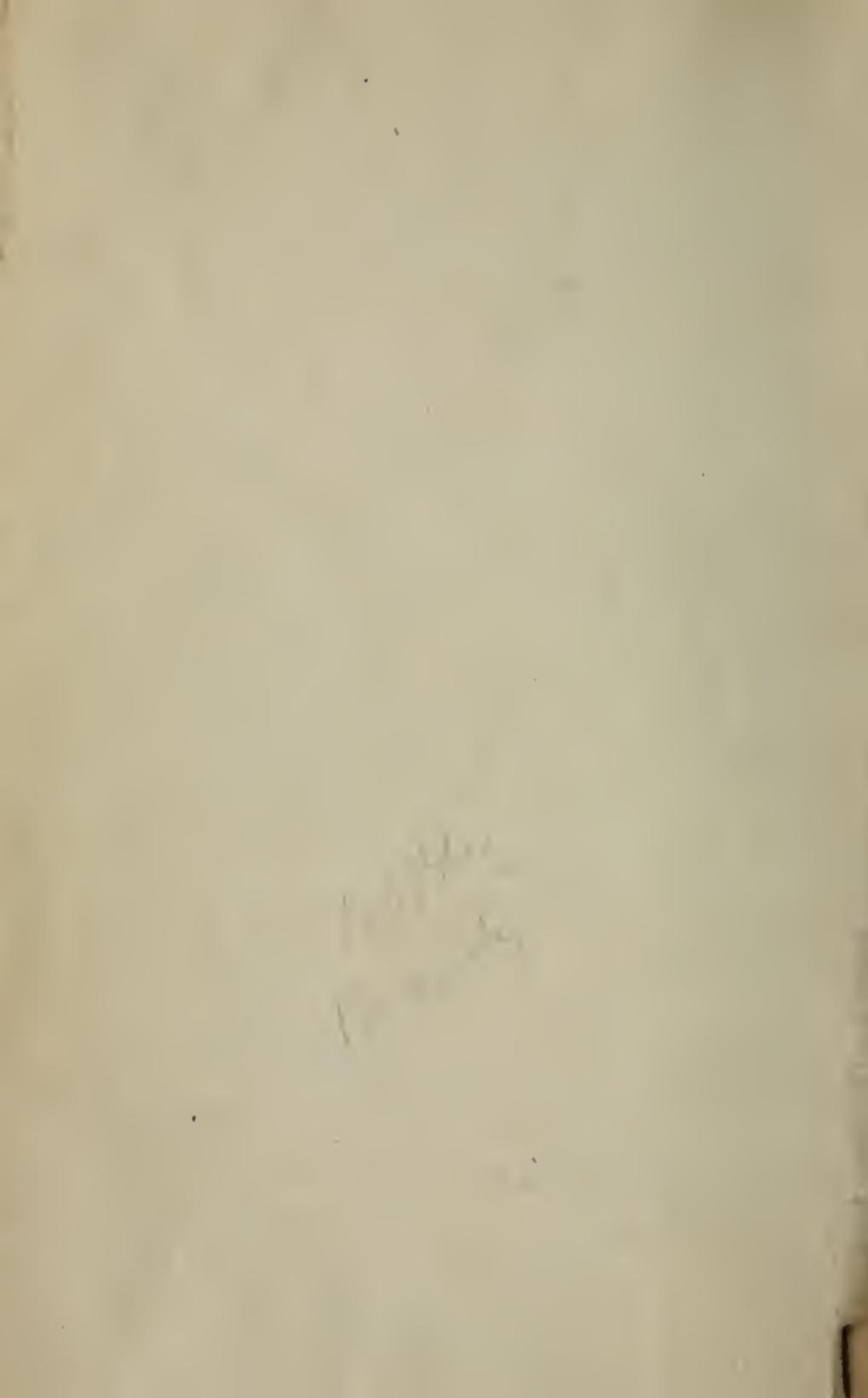


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A New Series of

THE DISCIPLINE OF LIFE.

Like an Æolian Harp that wakes
No certain air, but overtakes
Far thought with music that it makes
Such seemed the whisper at my side.
“What is’t thou know’st, sweet voice?” I cried.
“A hidden hope!” the voice replied.
To feel, although no tongue can prove,
That every cloud that spreads above
And veileth love—itself is love.

TENNYSON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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SUSAN GREVILLE.

CONTINUED.



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SUSAN GREVILLE.

CHAPTER XX.

To other strains our souls are set,
A giddy whirl of sin
Fills ear and brain, and will not let
Heaven's harmonies come in.

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

The bitter arrow went aside,
Oriana.
The false false arrow went aside,
And pierced thy heart, my love, my bride,
Oriana.

TENNYSON.

THE mind of man is so much the highest part of creation, that he is ever expecting the face of nature, the elements themselves, to sympathize with his sorrows and his joys. I have always remembered the dark sullen blasty morning that ushered in the 21st of

September. The clouds of Heaven rested upon its dawn, and darker clouds gathered about its close.

It was Sunday, and all the family from Keevor went to church as usual, with the exception of Mr. Greville, who was not very well, and felt unequal to the walk. No persuasions, not even Susan's, could ever induce him to deprive his horses of their day of rest, by using his carriage on such occasions. Julian was gentle, tranquil, and devoted to Susan. I breathed more easily than I had done the night before. Miss Vere was variable. Susan walked by her side, and was unremitting in her endeavours to soothe and to cheer her, and occasionally she seemed to be successful. Florence joined animatedly in the conversation, then again relapsed into gloom. As the day advanced the latter mood preponderated.

In the afternoon Susan remained with her father. Miss Vere also remained at home. Aunt Janet never went twice to church. When a proposal was once made to her to accompany us, she remarked, with a self-

satisfied air, “that *she* had attended to her prayers in the morning,” as if the afternoon service had been appointed as a refuge for those who, less disciplined than herself, had suffered their thoughts to wander in the earlier service of the day.

Julian, George Vivian, and I, set off together; but when we had nearly reached the church, Julian changed his mind, and said he would return again.

“You had better come on,” George Vivian said.

“On the contrary, I had better not,” he replied, half playfully; “I am thinking of something else.” He had, indeed, been deep in thought as we walked along.

He went back to the house—looked into the drawing-room and found it empty—went to his room and read there for a short time, and again returned to the drawing-room. This time it was not empty.

He opened the door, and there, in the low window-seat, Miss Vere was sitting. She was partly dressed for a walk, but her bonnet was lying on the ground beside her, and the large

plaid shawl which she had put on to defend herself from the cold wind, was falling from her shoulders. Her face was buried in her hands, and there was an *abandon* in her whole attitude and appearance that spoke of extreme unhappiness.

She had not heard the opening of the door, and as Julian paused and looked at her, a pang of sorrow and remorse shot through his heart. It is one of the causes which has made his character so full of warning, that he was as frequently led astray by his good and kindly feelings as by his more selfish ones. He had not learned—how many need to learn—that there is a higher guide of right and wrong than even the best and warmest feelings we possess. While he stood and gazed upon her, two voices made themselves audible within. There was one that reproached him for his past conduct, for the selfishness which had led him, for his own momentary relief and amusement, to gain her affections, which called upon his pity and compassion, and desired him who had caused her sorrow to endeavour to comfort her. There was

another, and this was the loudest voice—he could not say he was unwarned—which said, clear and distinct, “Depart, for the office of comforter is not for you—compassion from you will be a false compassion, tainted in its source, and therefore fatal in its effects.” He paused irresolute.

Suddenly Miss Vere raised her head, pulled her shawl over her shoulders, and laid her hand upon her bonnet. As she turned she saw him. The day was dark, and he did not observe her tear-stained cheek, but he saw that the instant she perceived him, her head was averted with a quick, he thought an angry movement. The struggle of voices which had made him pause, died away within him, and it was a mere hasty impetuous movement which led him to her side.

“Florence!” he said.

She did not answer him by word or look.

“Florence,” he cried, more imploringly—every resolution so lately made, the feelings of but an hour before fading away under the influence of sorrow, pity, remorse—I know not what besides.

She did not answer, and he bent forward and saw her tears.

He drew nearer—"Florence, are you unhappy?" he cried.

"What is it to you if I am?" she said, at last, in a tone of deep sadness; "what is it to any one?—I am alone;" and she buried her face in her hands again.

"Nothing to me!—ah! Florence," he cried, passionately, "you cannot think it. Nothing to me;—if I might—if I dared; oh! Susan, how much do you cost me!"

The words were scarcely pronounced before he would have given the world to have recalled them; not even at that moment were they the true expression of his mind; but our words—alas! alas! they cannot be recalled.

One instant's silence followed the exclamation—it was broken by a sound as of a fall. Julian turned, hurried to the door, and a piercing shriek brought Florence to his side. The words he had said had been heard by other ears than hers.

Susan had been reading the evening service to her father. When she had finished, he

became drowsy, and falling into a quiet sleep, Susan left him to go in search of Florence. She had a purpose half formed, to talk to her of what had lately passed—to advise her—gently to draw from her, if circumstances allowed it, her own thoughts, feelings, wishes. She had a power of reaching the hearts of others which few could resist.

It was a kind of anteroom which lay between the drawing-room and the library. Susan entered it and approached the door which Julian had left ajar. Her hand was upon it when those excited passionate accents—"nothing to me! ah! Florence," fell upon her ear. Startled and shocked, she was drawing back, but one of those fearful beatings of the heart, so well known in childhood, fixed her to the spot. She made a faint exclamation, unheard amid those wilder words, and pressed her hands tightly upon her heart, but every tone of Julian's voice reached her ear. With a deep gasp for breath, she drew back, but at the first step she fell on the floor. When Julian reached the door she was lying in the anteroom, her eyes closed, her cheek

deadly pale, and slowly from her lips was issuing a stream of blood.

It is impossible to picture the scene that followed. The unfortunate young man knelt by the side of his betrothed bride, and in imploring, despairing accents, called upon her name. Regardless of all beside, regardless even of hope for her, he held her cold hand, and again and again, in a voice heartrending in its agony, pathetic in its imploring tenderness, beseeched her to look up and to forgive him; and still while he knelt, the stream of life was ebbing fast away.

Florence, after one moment of stupified horror, awoke to the pressing exigencies of the case; she rang peal after peal of the bell, with a violence which brought the maids of the house, the men from the stables, Marshall from the garden, Aunt Janet from her afternoon's repose; but each and all alike stood transfixed—the maids pale, the men startled, Aunt Janet dumb, and with uplifted hands—hard natures like hers often lose their hardness and strength in moments of real emotion.

“What is to be done?” Florence called, indignantly. “Do you all stand there? Aunt

Janet, what should be done?—where is Bessie?"

As she spoke, Mrs. Lee entered, in her walking things, pale as her young mistress, but quiet and self-possessed.

"Why do you stand here?" she said to the startled men; "Thomas, hasten at once with the gig for Dr. Blandford—go," and the staring mob dispersed. "Mr. Julian—hush, sir; raise her gently in your arms—this way—there is life yet"—and Julian followed as in a dream, silent, obedient—his eyes immovably fixed on the death-like face that hung upon his arm.

"Lay her down, Mr. Julian," said Bessie, quietly, when they reached Susan's bedroom—"and now leave her, sir," as Julian bent over her in motionless despair; "you can do nothing here," and laying her hand on his arm she drew him away. In the same docile, obedient manner he left the room, and returned to the drawing-room.

Every creature had vanished—once aroused to the necessity of action, each and all were anxious to be employed.

He entered the drawing-room, and there, in

the same place where he had so lately found her, Florence sat weeping, as if her heart would break. For a time he did not notice her. What was Florence to him now? The light of his life was going out, and all before him was darkness. One sweet voice alone was ringing upon his ears—one soft glance alone was fixed upon his face.

But the sound of her weeping attracted him at last. He had been walking rapidly up and down the room—he paused, and went and stood before her. “Why do *you* weep, Florence?” he said; “*you* did not love her—she was nothing to *you*—*you* have not killed her, and yet *you* weep, and I shed no tear.” Florence answered nothing, and again his weary walk commenced.

Such was the state of the house which we had so peacefully left, when I and George Vivian returned from church. We were met on our entrance by a servant, who, with a face of startled horror, told us that Miss Greville was dying or dead. George Vivian darted forward, with an inquiry for Julian, but almost in the same instant Bessie appeared, and relieved our worst apprehensions.

She was on her way to Mr. Greville, who, forgotten in the turmoil of the house, had been sleeping peacefully, while death was hovering about his home. I relieved her of this duty, and went to break the intelligence to the bewildered old man. Happily for him, his bewilderment was too great to realize it. He received my communication as he had often before received the news of his daughter's indisposition, with sorrow and pity, with anxious questions, and recommendations of many simple remedies; then bidding me follow him, he went to the conservatory, to "cull for her his choicest flowers." I obeyed. Why should I have taken this consolation from his breast?

Meanwhile, George Vivian hastened to the drawing-room. He found Julian—his restless wandering over—leaning on both his hands, in a position peculiar to himself, against the tall, old-fashioned chimney-piece. Miss Vere was still seated at the window, but on his entrance she left the room. She had "meant no harm;" she had all this day been miserable, and had endeavoured to stifle her sorrow, and yet remorse was busy at her heart.

"There is hope yet, Julian," said George Vivian, gently.

Julian shook his head with a motion of despair. There was no answer to the word hope in his heart.

A moment afterwards he looked up, and observing that Florence was gone, he said—

"I killed her, George. I who, yesterday, said I loved but her—I broke her heart. She would have given her life for me; and yet her blood is here, on my hand, on my heart"—and he laid his head again upon the cold marble in a calmness of remorse, more affecting than any excitement of agony.

But I will not dwell upon the scenes of that day.

Late in the evening, observing that the eyes of her young mistress wandered often and anxiously around her, Bessie took upon herself to lead Julian to her bedside. But he was so overcome at the sight that she was forced to hurry him from the room. For once the fears of fancy had been less terrible than the reality. He had fancied her dying; but that pale face which had not strength even to smile upon

him, haunted him with an agony worse than death.

Between two and three in the morning, as I was watching and waiting, unable even to attempt to go to bed, or to sleep, my door suddenly opened, and Julian stood before me.

“Mr. Grantley,” he said, coming hurriedly towards me; “I can bear this no more. I will marry her, and this moment. If she dies, she shall die my wife. I come to you, because I think you pity me, and will listen to me. I heard that Mr. Graves was here to-night. You must go to him this moment. Mr. Grantley, I killed her—I broke her heart. If you do not wish me to go wild with agony—if you do not wish to see me a madman—a raving madman—let me have my will this night.”

His eyes were unnaturally sparkling; but he spoke with a determined vehemence, which had more of will than of excitement.

“These are wild words, Mr. Julian,” I said.

“They will be wilder, unless you listen to me,” he replied. “Mr. Grantley, have pity upon me.”

“And what will this marriage avail her now?” I argued; for I knew not how to resist him.

“I will be with her—I will have a right to watch over her—I will heal her with my love, or, if she must die, I will have her for my wife in heaven.” He spoke with a passionate tenderness, which, I confess, made me half a convert to his desire.

I went to the outer room, where Mrs. Lee was sitting up. She followed me into the passage, and I told her my errand. She did not appear to be surprised or disturbed; but, begging me to take her place for a moment, she went to Julian. None knew better than she did all the circumstances of the case, and yet, I believe, Julian was almost as dear to her as Susan herself.

“Mr. Julian,” she said, with the calm authority which was natural to her, “I do not wonder at your wish; but ask yourself, sir, is this a time to indulge in selfish wishes. Would this marriage, sir, undo the past? Rather return to your own room, and commune with your heart, and be still, and it may be

that God will spare her yet to be your living wife."

She laid her hand upon his arm to draw him away. Calmed, and humbled, and abashed, he followed her to the door of his room. She left him there, promising to return again at dawn of day.

When she fulfilled her promise, she found him sleeping in an arm chair, utterly exhausted by the violence of his emotions. She roused him to tell him that Susan was no worse, and to insist upon his going to bed. He obeyed, and slept for many hours.

CHAPTER XXI.

Not till the rushing winds forgot to rave,
Is Heaven's sweet smile reflected on the wave.

PLEASURES OF MEMORY.

A man alone shall be in worse company than are in all the world, if he bring not into him better company than himself, or all the world.

ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON.

FOR three days Susan hovered between life and death. Looking back at this distance of time, I can scarcely recal the feelings with which those long hours of anxiety were past, but we know that time and the hour do run through the roughest day, and possibly anxiety itself is one of those feelings which absorb the natural sense of Time; the agony of suspense fills up the tediousness of vacancy. Nothing was done at Keevor; nothing was said except

the ever-repeated question of Mr. Greville—“ And how is poor Susan now?” and the answer made hour by hour in a sadder voice as we endeavoured silently and unconsciously to prepare him for what we thought inevitably must come, “ There is no change yet.”

Miss Vere did not appear—she remained in her own room during those three long days, but Julian joined us again after the tumult of that first night was over. The advice which Mrs. Lee had given him to “ commune with his own heart and be still,” was not such advice as he could follow; could he have done so, different would have been his nature, different the history of his life.

Could he once resolutely have faced the source of all his wanderings, all his misery, his own weak sinful heart; could he have owned, not in the excitement of feeling, but in the sternness of self-examination, that he had erred and strayed like a lost sheep, and that there was no health in him, then might there have been hope that he would have risen from chastisement “ purged from passion’s hectic glow.” But the sight of his own heart

appalled him—he was too weak to face it. In the tumult of remorse its depths were hidden; but when the tumult past, and, in silence and stillness, the voice of a thousand good and holy feelings within him upbraided him for having neglected or trampled upon them, when they began their oft-repeated warnings against a life trifled away—against the awful consequences of the indulgence of selfish desires—when they began to speak of watchfulness and sacrifice for the future—of self-denial and self-control—he came forth again—he could not be alone with companions such as these. The present terrified him, the past was hateful. Turn where he would he saw but self—self—self—like the monster of Frankenstein, pursuing him, and exclaiming in the words, though not in the spirit of Roderick—

“ I am too weak
For solitude—too vile a wretch to bear
This everlasting communion with myself.”

He came again to find such refuge as he might, in the sight of the anxious troubled faces

which wandered silently and stealthily about the rooms and passages of Keevor.

"He that lacks time to mourn, lacks time to mend.
Eternity mourns that. 'Tis an ill cure
For life's worst ills to have no time to feel them.
Where Sorrow's held intrusive, and turned out,
There Wisdom will not enter, nor true power,
Nor aught that dignifies humanity."

It was not time that Julian wanted, but the will to make use of time; and the effects of want of will are more serious than those of want of time.

It must not, however, be supposed that Julian did not mourn. I speak only of profitable sorrow. Bowed to the earth he was, with grief, anxiety, and remorse; he rested not by day, he slept not by night—all I would say is, that while he yielded to the grief and horror of the hour, he refused to take it home to his heart. While he abandoned himself to a perfect luxury of remorse, he turned from the vigour and sacrifice of repentance.

On the morning of the fourth day, we were seated at breakfast, having been somewhat cheered by the news that Susan had had an

hour's real refreshing sleep, when Dr. Blandford entered the room, and begged for a few minutes conversation with me; in almost the same breath saying to the rest of the assembled company,—

“Miss Greville is decidedly better this morning,—allow me to congratulate you.”

Two exclamations only were heard—“Poor Susan!” in a sweet soft voice from her father, and quick and sharp from Aunt Janet, who had had a long penance of silence—“I knew she would get over it, and I never am wrong.”

Over the faces of both Julian and George Vivian a deep flush passed, but nothing was said.

Dr. Blandford was a physician in great practice in the district in which we lived. He was clever in his profession, and was a kind-hearted and amiable man, but I did not like him. He had an air of levity which in scenes of affliction was painful and oppressive, and, with a manner of the utmost frankness, he was shut up in impenetrable reserve. It was a principle with him to conceal his opinions, (I speak of matters of health,) and I would as

soon have trusted the fitful breeze as his flattering words of hope.

I followed him into the library, and he said — “Miss Janet is hasty in her conclusions, but I should be sorry to damp her spirits. She will, I trust, prove a true prophet, and we must exert ourselves in order to make her so. I have been sent for to Heathfield, and I must in consequence be absent the greater part of the day. I must therefore constitute you, Mr. Grantley, my deputy, and request you to see my wishes and orders fulfilled without fail.”

“ You may depend upon me,” I said.

“ I need not tell you, Mr. Grantley, that we are still at a great distance from recovery. Though out, I trust, of immediate, I cannot say that Miss Greville is out of all danger. Her constitution is not naturally a strong one, and it will be a considerable time before she is herself again. Under these circumstances, it is necessary that most vigorous measures should be taken, and the order which I wish you to enforce during my absence to-day is that the house should be cleared. I make no

exception, not even in favour of a lover.” He smiled, and looked as if he expected me to offer some resistance—but I only testified my entire acquiescence in his wishes.

“I do not wish to pry into family secrets, Mr. Grantley,” he continued, after a moment’s thought; “and I have no intention of alluding to such rumours as may have reached my ears; but that which comes professionally under my attention I am called upon to notice. It is very evident to me that Miss Greville must have undergone some kind of mental suffering or anxiety previous to this last attack. Her strength has been gradually undermined, and the principle of life appears to be so feeble, that it will require the most unremitting and watchful care to fan it into a flame. The first requisite is the most profound repose, and to further this I am compelled to insist upon the immediate departure of *all* those who are not the constant inhabitants of the house.”

“Mr. Julian Greville, Mr. Vivian, and Miss Vere,” I said.

“Precisely. I have spoken to Miss Greville’s attendant, and I find that, to my first proposal,

that their departure should be without Miss Greville's knowledge, she has some objections to make. She is an old acquaintance of mine—a friend," he said, laughing—"of a score of years or more, and I have great confidence in her discretion; the only charge, therefore, which I do leave is, that if any interview should take place, no single word should be spoken on either side, and that all excitement and expectation on Miss Greville's part should be avoided. I suppose I need not say more, when I add, that her life at this present moment depends on the obedience which is paid to my instructions and warnings."

" You shall be implicitly obeyed."

" I invest you, then, with my authority," he said, gaily, and was hurrying away, when I recalled him——

" What hope of a return may I give to those who are thus sent from Keevor? They will require some consolation."

" You are right, Mr. Grantley. Hope is the life of man. Let us say that we hope to welcome them to Keevor in two months from

this time;" and with a slight smiling bow he left the room.

With Mr. Vivian I had no difficulty—he saw at once the necessity of the case, and the prudence of the order, and promised immediate obedience. To Miss Vere's destination I gave much thought, and in vain. During the absence of Lady Mortimer, she was positively friendless, and I came at last to the conclusion, that a short absence with Aunt Janet would be the only possible arrangement; she might then return to Keevor unknown to Susan. I went myself to inform her of Dr. Blandford's wishes.

Though the weather was still cold and dreary, she was seated at the window,—her long curls floating carelessly about her; books, work, music, were strewed upon the chairs, and on the floor, but she was, as she too often was, idle and unoccupied. My last visit to her room had been on the day of her arrival, and still fresh and bright it was; but my envy was gone; and heartily I joined in Bessie's sentiment, that it is not a place that

makes a paradise. She was looking worn, pale, and sad; her lashes heavy with shed, or unshed tears, I know not which, and,—perhaps I am too compassionate, but my heart bled for her. Suffering, I saw she was, and if remorse was added to her grief, much more need was there to pity her.

She received me coldly, and there was haughtiness and formality in the seat which she immediately offered me. I declined it, and briefly, and without comment, I told her the purport of my visit.

She turned away, and began to play with the flowers which ornamented the stand in the window; but I saw that she blushed painfully at the mention of the necessity for her departure.

She merely bowed her head, and made no answer.

“And where would she go?” I asked compassionately, and was about to mention the plan I had formed, when she said haughtily,—

“I am not quite so destitute as you seem to suppose, Mr. Grantley. I had a letter yes-

terday morning from Lady Mortimer, to tell me of her arrival in London, and to beg me to go to her at once."

"I am very happy, Miss Vere, to hear of her return. You will, I trust, avail yourself of her invitation?"

"I suppose I must," she said, and she sighed deeply.

There was no more to be said: but as I was leaving the room, I asked her if she had any wish to see Miss Greville.

She had turned to the window, and she did not look round. There was a short silence, and then she only said, coldly, "It must be as Susan pleases."

I made no further observation, and left the room; but I had not got many steps from the door, when she pursued me; her eyes were full of tears, and her voice was softness itself; she held out her hand to me,—

"I shall go very early to-morrow morning, Mr. Grantley, and I don't wish to see any one,—no one can wish to see me. Give my love to Mr. Greville, and my thanks for all

his kindness, and tell him not to curse the day that brought me to Keevor. I never shall come back again."

She hastily withdrew her hand, before I could speak one word of kindness, and retreated to her own room.

"The interviews," as Dr. Blandford had called them, were arranged by Bessie with the utmost discretion. Towards dusk, she stood by Susan's bedside, and told her of the orders that had been given, the departure of her guests, and the destination of Miss Vere and Julian. She then quietly said that she was going to bring them to take leave of her, but that nothing was to be said or attempted to be said on either side. She had previously desired Julian to be ready, and as she left the bedside, she was replaced by him. My warnings had been too strongly enforced to be transgressed. Susan with difficulty held out her hand: he knelt down and kissed it, with the reverence given to a saint, looked at her with one repentant, imploring gaze, received her faint, sweet smile, and left the room. In the passage he was met by Bessie and Florence.

They had not met before. He turned away his head for a moment, but the next instant, held out his hand. Already trembling and excited, this meeting added to Florence's emotion, and as she stooped over Susan's bed, her tears fell like rain upon her face. It is not only before "music's spell" that language fades: in those silent meetings and partings, how much had been spoken, confessed, asked, and forgiven.

The following morning, Miss Vere early—not so early but that I stood at the door to receive her weeping farewell—departed. Julian and George Vivian went at a later hour; and very desolate, after their departure, was the house at Keevor.

I omitted to mention, a few pages back, that on the day after Susan's illness, Julian, notwithstanding the most vehement remonstrances from Mr. Vivian, persisted in writing to Mr. Painter, to declare his intention of resigning all thoughts of standing for the county: and so ended the occasion which had

been offered for the exercise of the talents he undeniably possessed, and the awakening of the energies which lay dormant within him.

He accompanied George Vivian to Llandover. The hope of the latter had been that he would consent to remain there in the moderate seclusion to which his present circumstances led him, and that he might at length learn that quietness of spirit and regularity of occupation, which was becoming daily a more pressing need for the temptations of his excitable spirit. He hoped to engage him in some course of study, for which the excellent library of the house afforded a fair opportunity; or, taking advantage of the beauty of the surrounding country, to urge him to improve himself in the art of painting, in which he was already no mean proficient; or again, with the sight of some curious old Welsh manuscripts, he endeavoured to awaken his antiquarian tastes, and thus induce him to join him in the study of the Welsh language,—to which pursuit (for the better understanding of his own tenantry) he was purposing to

devote himself. The *what* was a matter of small importance; the necessity was simply to draw him from the bondage of his own uncertain temper, by placing him under the control of a life of order and rule.

But remedies, to be efficacious, must perhaps have some sympathy with the disease. Sorrow and repentance can submit to the severe, yet softening influence, of a life of stern discipline and resolute self-denial; but remorse and anxiety are great disturbers of the mind, and they who, under such circumstances, are sufficiently regulated to submit to quietness, are such as, perhaps, need discipline no more. George saw quickly that his plan must be changed; for excitement over, Julian sank into apathy.

His next proposal, and this met with Julian's warm approbation, was, that they should make a tour of the United Kingdom. George was a true Briton, and Julian's preference of foreign countries was to him a source of perpetual irritation. He wished to show him, and force him to own, the beauty of his own land; but, beyond and above this, he had a higher and

wiser purpose. He wished to stimulate him to industry, and to excite his interest in his countrymen, by the sight of the quiet, orderly habits of the English peasantry in the agricultural districts; and rousing him from his perpetual brooding over the ills of fancy, to turn his over-sensitive sensibility into active benevolence, by making him acquainted with the degradation and misery of the lower classes in some of the large manufacturing towns; and by the sight of the poverty and patience which the Irish peasantry so forcibly exhibit.

The rapid approach of winter was a circumstance rather favourable to his plan than otherwise. Julian was too fond of luxury and repose, and the bracing of the body is often the first step to the invigorating of the mind.

I have often wondered at the peculiarity of Julian's destiny, which allotted to his share two such untiring labourers for his peace and welfare. Many cannot command even one. It spoke much for the attaching qualities of his heart, and the good dispositions latent within him, that none ever approached him

with other feelings than those of kindness; that his whims, his follies, his fancies, were all forgotten after one kind word; and that services to him were even overpaid, if rewarded by his pleased and beaming smile. Happy, no doubt he was, that such love and care pursued him; but I have sometimes doubted whether the unceasing attention which he received had not its dangers, and great dangers also. He never learnt to stand alone. At one-and-twenty he was still a child, hanging on others for guidance in his actions, and still more for strength in his mind.

CHAPTER XXII.

There seemed to lie a weight upon her brain
That ever pressed her blue-veined eyelids down,
But could not dim her lustrous eyes with pain,
Nor seam her forehead with the faintest frown,
She was, as it were, proud
So young to be allowed
To follow Him who wore the thorny crown.

Nor was she sad, but over every mood
To which her lightly pliant mind gave birth,
Gracefully changing did a spirit brood
Of quiet gaiety and serenest mirth.
And thus her voice did flow,
So beautifully low,
A stream whose music was no thing of earth.

R. M. MILNES.

THE two months, as I had well anticipated, found us at Keevor, still anxious and dispirited,—and, by Dr. Blandford's orders, Julian's return was indefinitely delayed.

His real opinion I attempted in vain to penetrate; day after day, and week after week, he spoke of hope, not only to Mr. Greville, but to Bessie and to me; and yet Susan still lay immovable—her voice too faint to be heard, her eyes too languid to be opened. To my impatient questions he only replied, “Nature is slow, Mr. Grantley, in her operations—a blighted plant is not restored in a day.” To my desponding exclamations, “Time is all-powerful, Mr. Grantley, put your trust in her as I do;” and so we lived on through a dark, dismal, stormy winter. The truth was, and I see it now, that the shock which Susan had received in Julian’s apparent falsehood was greater than we could any of us adequately conceive—there was nothing remaining to give a spring to her failing powers, there was no strong animating principle to call her back into the vigorous stream of life. It was prostration of the mental as well as the bodily powers.

Spring came at last—and ever welcome to me are the first harbingers of spring, but never so welcome, as when I lifted the head

of the first snowdrop after the dreary winter we had gone through. Dr. Blandford had, for some weeks, been talking of spring as that which would bring life and health on its wings—and I began to believe him at last, for with some soft summerlike days in the beginning of February, Susan began to revive—and the impetus once given, her improvement was rapid.

On the first day of April she appeared in the drawing-room. When we left the dining-room we found her there, and she got up from the sofa and came forward with her soft sweet smile to meet us. Poor Mr. Greville almost stifled her with kisses, till he was sharply rebuked by Aunt Janet; he then led her to her seat, and contented himself with gazing at her in mute love and wonder. He had not been unhappy during her illness—the daily bouquet which he had made for her had occupied much of his time, and like a child he had been quickly accustomed to the loss of her society. I do not think his mind was capable of any emotions stronger than tenderness and pity.

Aunt Janet, though sincerely attached to

Susan, and truly anxious for her recovery, had yet enjoyed herself extremely. She had made herself completely mistress of the house, and exercised her office with as much discretion and much more gentleness and forbearance than I should have expected of her. Perhaps I alone had truly missed the sound of that sweet voice and the light of those loving eyes —yet I am wrong in saying this—dark had been the cloud which, during her illness, had overspread her home both within and without the house, and the Amen which, on the following Sunday, concluded the thanksgiving in which Susan's name was mentioned, was “not loud but deep.” It was the voice of gratitude itself.

But my perfect happiness on that evening was shortlived. I had occasionally visited Susan in her dressing-room; but in the dress of an invalid it is difficult to judge of the degree of health and strength which has been regained; now, as the bright lamp fell upon her face, I examined her more nearly and intently, and my observations filled me with anxiety and alarm. She was looking, I

thought, lovely; but it was not the loveliness of health,—that transparent cheek, that flitting colour, those lustrosely bright eyes—did not speak of length of days; to my fancy they rather spoke of the approach of that disease which adds to the beauty of its victims.

When Mr. Greville left his daughter's side to take his evening's sleep, I approached her. She invited me, with a smile, to sit down by her couch, but when I did so, she sank into silence. I did not disturb her. I guessed the subject of her meditations.

At length, turning to me with a calm manner, but with a quick blush overspread-ing her face, she asked if I had lately heard from Mr. Vivian? I answered, “that I had, about a fortnight before this time. He and Julian were then,” I said, “at Llandover, but they were just starting for Ireland.”

“ You write occasionally, do you not?” she said.

“ Yes,” I replied, “ weekly.”

“ I think,” she continued, after a moment's pause, “ that it will be as well to tell Mr.

Vivian that he and Julian may now return to Keevor, if they desire to do so; but I should wish," she added, with another of those bright overspreading flushes, "that you should say it from yourself and not from me."

"I will write," I replied, "to-morrow." I had not yet," I said, "received Dr. Blandford's instructions on the subject, or Mr. Vivian and Mr. Julian Greville would not now be absent. They were anxiously awaiting their recal." I said this emphatically, and, hoping that I had relieved her mind from many doubts and fears, I asked her if she felt equal to read some of the letters which I had received from them during her illness. "They would, perhaps," I said, "interest her," and I rose from my seat to go in search of them.

She stopped me, however, and, though kindly and gratefully, declined my offer. A short silence followed, and she then began to question me about the affairs of the neighbourhood; and as she conversed, a part, at least, of my apprehensions for her health began to fade away.

A week went by, and we were all again assembled in the drawing-room, awaiting the arrival of Julian, and George Vivian.

The evening was wearing away. A hundred times Mr. Greville had remarked, "Poor Julian, how tired he will be." A hundred times Aunt Janet (whose present chief source of enjoyment arose from the exercise of a petty tyranny which Susan, in weakness and ill health, had no longer the power to resist,) had exclaimed—"It is no use to think of sitting up, Susan—go to bed you shall at the proper time—don't look so foolish and woe-begone; I know what is right, and it is a good thing that there is somebody in the house who does know it."—And still they did not appear.

As, on a former occasion, Julian had come unexpectedly, to escape from the formality of a regular introduction, so now, with more cause for nervousness, he had insisted on delaying his arrival till the latest possible hour, in order that his first meeting with Susan should be a hurried one. It was exactly half-past ten, and Aunt Janet's voice—"Now,

Susan, to bed—to bed," was loudly resounding, when the door-bell, with a violent ring, announced that they were come.

A moment afterwards they were in the room.

Susan and Julian met gravely. Nothing was said on either side; and having shaken hands with her, Julian sat down at a little distance.

Susan's colour went and came, and went again, but she was the first to recover herself, and the first of the party to break the silence.

"It is rather late, I suppose, for such a question; but have you dined, Julian?"

"Dined! my dear Susan, what are you thinking of?" cried Aunt Janet; "I know what I should say, if I was cook, to such a proposal as that."

"Don't be alarmed for Mrs Whyte's feelings, Aunt Janet," said Julian—glad to be able to speak, and not to Susan. "We have dined."

"We dined at six o'clock, two stages from here," observed George Vivian. "Julian considered a good deal about it, and I assure you,

Miss Janet, Mrs. Whyte's comfort was not forgotten."

" You are very kind," said Mr. Greville; " and now, Julian, how do you think poor Susan looks? she has had a sad winter of it; she has never been out, except once or twice this last week."

Susan's colour ebbed and flowed again, and Julian sat with downcast eyes. Had Susan been alone, all fear and shyness would have been forgotten. He was ready to kneel before her to ask her pardon; but to meet her thus was worse than he had even fancied. Aunt Janet opportunely interfered—

" My dear Fulke, pray let us leave Susan's looks—we have had enough of them, in all conscience. Susan, what do you mean by not offering tea? though people don't want dinner, they may want tea. I know I am always parched with thirst after a journey—my throat becomes a perfect specimen of a newly-made road. Mr. Grantley, I'll trouble you to ring the bell."

" Miss Greville has ordered tea," I said, quietly. I am afraid I felt a pleasure in dis-

concerting Aunt Janet; but she was invulnerable.

“I’m glad of it, and the sooner it comes the better, for Susan ought to be in bed by this time. Well, Mr. Julian, what have you been doing with yourself?—where do you come from?”

“We have been travelling a great deal. We are just come back from Ireland.”

“I have been endeavouring to make Julian know and admire England as well as I do myself,” George Vivian said, addressing Susan.

“And has Mr. Vivian succeeded, Julian?” she inquired, looking towards him with a calm smile and a steady countenance.

He laughed slightly, and shook his head.

“I have twice heard him exclaim, that ‘he had never seen anything so beautiful in his life,’ in the course of our travels,” continued George Vivian; “and though on one of those occasions we were in Ireland, and the other in Scotland, and therefore I, as an Englishman, could not be quite satisfied, still we must rejoice in the progress we are making.”

“Were you pleased with Ireland and the

Irish?" Susan said, moving a little nearer, and waiting for his answer, with a quietness and self-possession which surprised me.

He looked at her at last. "I like the Irish, Susan, and pity them, too. They are not so steady as the English,—too much given to agitation and excitement; but, I am sure, in their hearts they mean well." His dark eyes rested sorrowfully upon her as he spoke, and I saw her colour flit over her pale cheek again. She understood him well, and I also.

When tea appeared a moment afterwards, Susan got up to make it; but Julian was recovering himself. Perhaps in the look which he had fixed upon her face, he too had been struck with her fragile air and transparent complexion; and with something of old familiarity, he said gently—

"No, Susan, sit still—I am sure you are tired; Aunt Janet will make tea."

"Quite right, Mr. Julian; I can tell you she wants a great deal of looking after. We must give her up into your special care;"—and she hastened, delighted, to the tea-table.

Julian fixed his eyes on Susan as Aunt

Janet spoke, with a half smiling, half imploring gaze, but though she felt his eyes upon her, she did not respond to it. She seated herself quietly at his bidding, and was evidently struggling with herself to be unconscious and composed; but I could see the flutter of breathing in her throat—I could see the beating of her heart, and I felt how painful this first meeting was becoming to her feelings, how dangerously exciting for her health.

I, however, could not interfere. But there was one who watched her more closely, and read her more perfectly than even I, who had known her from her childhood, and *he* was not slow in acting for her now.

He followed Julian to the tea-table, and while Aunt Janet was clattering with the cups, spoke to him in a low voice.

Julian turned round—then, approaching Susan, said, anxiously—

“Now, Susan, I know that we have kept you and your father up longer than we ought to have done. Don’t think of us any more. See, how tired he looks—good night!”—and

with a fond, earnest glance, as he held out his hand, he parted from her.

Mr. Greville was glad to be released, and Susan not less so. She had not expected Julian to be so tender, so repentant—in fancy she had dwelt upon his love for Florence, till her own share in him had almost been forgotten—and bitter, I fear, very bitter were the tears she shed ere she slept that night.

CHAPTER XXIII.

In vain to-night my lip hath strove
To send one holy prayer above;
The knee may bend, the lip may move,
But pray I cannot without thee.

A boat at midnight sent alone
To drift upon the moonless sea ;
A lute whose leading chord is gone,
A wounded bird that hath but one
Uncertain wing to soar upon
Are like what I am without thee.

MOORE.

SUSAN had not hitherto been allowed to appear at Mr. Greville's early breakfast, but she came down the morning after Julian's arrival. She had, I am sure, a painful sense of the degree of agitation which she had shown on the previous evening, and she wished to do away its effects before she and Julian met, as they soon must do, in private. Nothing now could be more tranquil than her appearance,

more quiet and undisturbed than her manners. She took the hand which Julian held out to her, kindly and smilingly—talked more and more animatedly than was usual—blushed no more, trembled no more; and though her cheek was very pale, there was about her a look of greater firmness and strength than I had seen since her illness.

When breakfast was over, Julian was the first to get up, and approaching her, to say in a low, hurried voice,—

“ Susan, I am miserable—you will not keep me so—you will let me come to speak to you.”

And calmly and kindly she replied—“ I also wished to speak to you, Julian. Will you come now, or later?—we shall not be disturbed in the drawing-room.”

“ May I come now?—do you not go to your father?”

“ No, not yet.” It was long since she had been allowed to read to him.

“ Then let it be now,” and he followed her into the drawing-room.

She sat down in her old seat, and took up the embroidery-frame which had stood in the

recess, untouched, till within the last few days.

Julian had an observant eye for trifles—they often awoke his fancy, and excited his fancy more than great things; he pointed to a particular part of the work, and said, sadly,—

“It was there you left off, Susan—you have done but little since then.”

She looked up with a slight smile, and he went on—

“Ah, Susan! has it indeed been so?—all these long months have you been so ill?”

“I have been very ill,” she said, gravely; “but it is past now, Julian, and it is not of the past that I wish to speak to you, but of the present and the future.”

“But I must speak of the past, Susan; it is not past to me; it is living in my memory, torturing it! Oh, Susan! have you forgiven me?”

“If you think I have anything to forgive, dear Julian,” she replied, in the same grave, calm manner; “if it will make you happier that such words should pass between us, I will

not refuse to say it. I have long, long forgiven you, and—it was not hard." And with a smile, she held out her hand to him, as if in token of what she said.

He took it earnestly, eagerly; and, attracted and saddened by the wan, pale, transparent look of the small fingers, he held it and pressed it tenderly and remorsefully to his lips.

She withdrew it with the same gravity of manner.

He looked at her. Her intention, her fixed determination, began to dawn upon his mind.

"Susan," he said, fearfully, "you do not mean to cast me from you?"

"Not to cast you from me, Julian; but if there yet remains anything of engagement between you and me, to release you from it."

"You do cast me away!" he cried, passionately; "you forsake me!"

"No, Julian. I will be to you anything that you will—*except one*—I cannot be your wife!"

"It is a mockery, Susan, to say such words. We are too little, and have been too much, to each other to be friends. If you cast me

away—if you refuse to be my wife—you will leave me to utter wretchedness.”

She was silent.

He came and stood before her. “ Susan, do not think that I am not well aware how much I have offended you. I know that it is very just that you should forsake me. If you were to hate me, it would only be what I deserve. But you are not what others are; and still I have hope in your gentleness and your pity, if only you love me still. If that is past, then I ask nothing—then, indeed, I am miserable. Look at me, Susan, and answer me truly. Have I offended your love past hope and past redemption? Would it make *you* miserable to be my wife?”

Her heart was trembling inwardly, and the blood went and came upon her cheek; but she answered with a seriousness that was almost cold, “ It is not a question of my love, Julian, but of yours.”

“ It is in vain,” he said, his eyes resting upon her face, watching the fitful colour upon her cheek, “ your cold words are vain; you cannot deceive me. I feel, wretch that I am,

and wretch that I have been to you, that you love me still."

She remained silent—neither confessed nor denied.

"Then, Susan," he continued, eagerly, "hear me speak. It matters not that you release me, I will not be released. I will watch, I will wait, I will win you at last. I will—" He paused; then laying his hand on hers, repeated some words from the marriage service with a resolute, determined tone—"I will love you and cherish you in sickness and in health, and forsaking all other—"

"Hush, Julian!" she said, almost sternly, "I will not hear those words."

"But I will speak them, Susan! 'Forsaking all other, I will cling only—'"

She got up resolutely, and without a word or look, left the room.

But Julian, though irresolute in character, was firm enough (as indeed we all are) where his wishes were concerned. Susan's refusal did but enhance her value, and with his whole heart he set himself to melt her purpose. Day by day, whenever a hearing could be obtained,

he poured out his prayers with a tenderness, a passion, which love itself only could have withstood.

“ But Love himself took part against himself,
To warn her off.”

Those words, “ Oh, Susan, how much have you cost me!” were for ever ringing in her ears, and warning her, for his sake, for the sake of his future welfare, to withstand him.

And yet her mind was painfully torn and shaken. When he told of his remorse, of his long months of waiting, of the shadow that must for ever rest upon his life, if she refused him the opportunity to prove his repentance—when he spoke of his fixed unalterable resolution to cling to her so long as a hope remained, so long as she herself was free—when day by day such words, in his low melodious tones, were poured upon her ear, her strength began to fail, her perception to be darkened as to the side on which duty lay—her thoughts to be agitated with an unceasing conflict.

One morning Julian was reading in the drawing-room; Mr. Greville was also there,

professedly looking over some prints, but in reality dozing. It was a rainy day, and Susan, who felt the influence of the weather since her illness, was sitting, tired and drooping, by the fire; a book was in her hand, but her mind was wandering far away.

Julian suddenly got up, and drew a chair near to the place where she sat. He held in his hand a volume of Milton's works, and laying it on a small table which stood between him and Susan, he asked her if she remembered the opening of the fourth book of "Paradise Lost?"

"No," she said.

Julian was a passionate admirer of this poem; and although it was not naturally a favourite of hers, yet, when he read it, she had often heard it with an admiration equal to his own.

He desired her to listen now; and, in a voice of deep feeling, rather recited than read the following lines. They are spoken of Satan, when revolving the temptation in his mind, but before his character has wholly "lost its original brightness."

“ —— Horror and doubt distract
His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir
The Hell within him—for within him Hell
He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
One step, no more than from himself can fly
By change of place. Now conscience wakes despair
That slumbered—wakes the bitter memory
Of what he was, what is, and what must be
Worse—of worse deeds worst sufferings must ensue.
Sometimes towards Eden, which now in his view
Lay pleasant, his grieved look he fixes sad,
Sometimes towards Heaven and the full blazing sun,
Which now sate high in his meridian tower—
Then much revolving thus in sighs began”—

Julian paused. “ This is a dreadful picture
of a mind, is it not, Susan?”

“ Dreadful,” she said, almost with a
shudder.

“ You cannot understand it. It seems to
you horrible—unnatural.”

She looked at him without speaking.

“ I know it must. Even here, Susan,” and
he turned over the leaves of the book, “ even
here there is no mind pictured so clear and
pure as yours. But I can understand it; and,
Susan,” he added, in a deep, emphatic voice,
“ I have *felt* it.”

“ Oh, Julian!” she said, earnestly, “ it is

not by studying such words, by dwelling on such fearful comparisons, that you will find that peace which you say you desire. You may see a likeness; perhaps we all might at times; but will you have it so?"

"I am not studying it, Susan. I am not dwelling upon it. I came to the description, and it struck me, because it is myself; but I would not have it so. Will *you* have it so—it rests with you. Will you leave me a prey to ——" he paused. "Susan, have pity upon me. Truly I do not know what will become of me if you persist in *your* refusal to be my wife; if you send me away to wander to and fro upon the earth."

"It is not to wander about the world, dear Julian. You have duties as others have."

"You must hear me, Susan, once more, and I will tell you what I feel. There is a voice within me continually warning me that with you my welfare, in this world and the next, is inseparably bound up—that you are the guardian angel appointed to lead me to Paradise. I felt it, Susan, from the first moment I saw you; and never, never—much as I have

offended you, much as I own I have wandered—has that feeling worn away. You can do with me what you will. Now I stand like Satan, as I read just now, on the borders of two worlds;—grieving sad, my eye wanders to Eden;—dear Susan, I would be what you are—I would be perfect, holy, as you are—a child of God, and an inheritor of Heaven; but by myself I cannot. I am so weak, so soon wearied—so soon turned aside. Unless your gentle voice should guide and cheer me, I shall wander far, far, as I have already done, and what will become of me I dread to think. Susan, dearest Susan, have pity upon me!"

"Why, Julian, what has Susan done?" said Mr. Greville, awaking from his doze, and contemplating them with a smile. Julian was leaning forward on the table. Susan's head was turned away, for, weak and wearied, her tears were falling, and she could not restrain them.

Julian got up suddenly, and went to Mr. Greville. "I have offended Susan," he said; "she is angry with me, and justly angry. Beg her to have pity upon me—she will listen to you."

" My dear Julian—*can* Susan be angry?—my poor Susan, you look pale; is it because Julian has made you sorry?—come here to me." She approached him trembling, and before she was aware he put her hand into Julian's; " is not this how it should be?" he said, with a childish smile; " dear Susan, you are not angry now."

She gently withdrew her hand, stooped over him and kissed him, and left the room.

It was later in the day. The rain had cleared away, and Julian was gone to drive with Mr. Greville. He had asked to take my place that afternoon.

George Vivian was standing at the window of the ante-room, inspecting the appearance of the weather for one of his " long strides," when Susan came down, and seeing him, instantly approached him.

" I am glad to have found you," she said, " for I have something to ask you, a favour which I wish you to do for me. Have you time to listen to me, now?"

He smiled his acquiescence, and opening the door of the drawing-room, she continued,

"Will you come in here? I shall detain you for some little time, I am afraid."

He followed her into the adjoining room. She pushed a chair nearer to the fire for him, and sat down herself.

As he seated himself he said, "I am sure you must know that you may command me for anything; you will not ask what I cannot do."

"I felt I might come to you," she replied, "though, perhaps, you will think my request a strange one. I must try and explain to you why I ask it." She turned her face nearer to the fire, a little averted from him, and after a short pause said, in a voice slightly trembling, and with a manner that had something of shyness and timidity in it, something of sadness, too—"I suppose you know all that has passed between Julian and me—I think you must know why I ought not, I feel I ought not, to allow this engagement to continue between us."

He made a slight movement to answer her.

"Perhaps, then," she continued, and her

voice was lower and more trembling still—“perhaps you will wonder at me and blame me if, under any circumstances, I should be induced to listen to Julian’s wish—you will think me weak, as indeed I am, and perhaps, I do not know, it may be so, perhaps selfish, too?”

He was unable to speak—he could but slowly shake his head.

“I ought not to detain you with my own private feelings,” she continued, rousing herself; “I will tell you what it is that you can do for me. I feel that my determination now must depend, in a great degree, upon my prospect of life. If I am to live long—if, according to all human calculation, the day of my death is still far removed—I must be firm—I must not, because I am weak when he speaks, blight his future existence, and suffer him to bind himself to one who is not such as his wife should be, and whom”—her voice faltered, “he does not love as he *can* love. But if, as I think myself, my days are numbered, I will not refuse what he asks; I will endeavour to make him happy while I

live, and perhaps, be happy myself; though," she continued, a faint smile flitting over her face, "you must think my pride strangely fallen, to say so."

She paused a moment; but, though listening with fixed attention, he said nothing. She was not, however, observing him or his silence, and she went on.

"My difficulty is, that I cannot discover what are my chances for life or death. I have endeavoured, and in vain, to gather from Dr. Blandford what his real opinion is. He speaks to me always of hope and life, and yet I feel myself as if the cords that bind me to this world could not last for many weeks longer. I know that both Mr. Grantley and Bessie have failed in inducing him to speak—will you undertake for me to make him give a true opinion? To you, who are less connected with this house, he might speak as he will not speak to us—he might think it needless to deceive with flattering words. I have no doubt myself of how it is—we have, have we not, unspoken warnings that we are approaching the end of our earthly existence—

but I *might* be wrong—mere feelings of weakness *might* mislead me, and when Julian's happiness and future good are concerned, I must not act on my own opinion. I must *know*. Will you undertake to discover this mystery for me?"

"It is a strange and a painful task," he said, with a nervous tremulous smile, "but you may depend upon me."

"Dr. Blandford comes to-morrow morning; perhaps you will find some means of speaking to him, but it must be judiciously done. He has some principle, that there is gloom in the thought of death, and he will not speak till he is forced to do so. You must not ask him—you must draw his opinion from him; but I will trust to you."

"You may depend upon me," he repeated. He had not the power even to vary his phrase.

"Thank you very, very much for your kindness in listening to me," she said gently, and she got up from her seat.

He was still silent.

As if at last attracted by his silence, she

paused as she was moving away, and leaning her hand on the table near him, said anxiously,

“ I am afraid you think my judgment wrong — I am afraid you think me very weak; or perhaps you wonder that, standing as I do on the brink of the grave, my thoughts should be so earthly still.”

There was a fearful bound of his heart, as if it must have leaped forth and poured his tale of love and worship at her feet; but, swift as the feeling rose, the thought of her, the love of her, controlled it again. If she should become Julian’s wife, if new and fresh trials should await her, what might not he with his silent guardianship effect. He would not place a barrier between them.

“ Indeed, indeed, I perfectly understand you,” was all he said, tranquilly, though mournfully, and she left him.

Dr. Blandford came the following morning. When George Vivian saw him enter the house, he set off down the winding avenue (which is not, though custom has made it, a contradictory epithet) that led to the high road. He had reached the end of it, and was doubting which

way to turn, when the light phaëton, drawn by two active-looking ponies, appeared. Dr. Blandford was reading, but George Vivian called to him as he passed, inquiring which way he was going?

“ I am on my way to Heathfield; can I be of any use to you?”

“ Of great use,” George said, smiling, “ if you will give me a lift as far as the turnpike;” and he jumped into the carriage.

“ The rain yesterday was useful,” he remarked, looking about him as he went along. “ How green everything looks.”

“ Yes; the farmers have been grumbling, and with more cause than usual. I and the farmers, Mr. Vivian, live in perpetual warfare—they are always calling for rain, and I for sunshine, both personally and professionally.”

“ I am afraid I should be your enemy also,” replied his companion, following quietly the course of the conversation. “ After a week’s sunshine I always begin to have restless nights, on account of the turnips.”

“ You are a great farmer, I suppose, Mr. Vivian?”

"Not great, but I like farming—it is a strong natural taste. I wish I could make Julian Greville like it also; it would be good for him, I think."

"Bring him a little out of the clouds," said Dr. Blandford, laughing. "Yes, I agree with you." They went on a little way in silence, George then inquired—

"Is there any small place, any farm of sixty or a hundred acres, to be sold in this neighbourhood?"

"There was one a short time ago, near Heathfield. Are you thinking of settling in these parts, Mr. Vivian?"

"Not settling, altogether, but Julian wishes me to have some interest about here. He was talking to Mr. Greville's bailiff on the subject yesterday. He will, I suppose, naturally have to live a good deal at Keevor after his marriage, and as we have been accustomed to be much together, he wishes me to be near him."

Dr. Blandford fell into a short meditation on his companion's words. He then inquired in an altered tone, "When does this marriage take place?"

"I don't know—I have not heard the time mentioned," he replied, quietly. "I suppose, however, it will depend a good deal on your orders."

"It had better be delayed," he said, quickly.

"I am sorry you think so, and indeed I disagree so much with your opinion, that I would use all the influence I possess to hasten it. It has been a long engagement, and it would be better for all parties to have it concluded. I am sure the delay cannot be good for Miss Greville."

"I was not speaking of Miss Greville," replied Dr. Blandford, gravely. He hesitated, began to speak, changed his mind, and spoke to the coachman instead—again seemed to consider the point, and at last said, "As we are on this subject, Mr. Vivian, I may as well say to you now, what I must sooner or later have said, when my opinion on the marriage was formally asked. I neither order nor forbid it; but to you, as a friend of Mr. Julian Greville's, I say this—if the marriage takes place, he will be a widower within a month!"

George Vivian turned his head away for a

moment, then said quietly, though sadly, “Inevitably?”

“Why, Mr. Vivian, I may have spoken hastily. I wished to convey to you strongly my worst anticipations. What I mean to say is this; I cannot precisely speak of time; anxiety might accelerate, quiet and a favourable summer might prolong Miss Greville’s life, but her days are numbered; human skill cannot restore her. If Mr. Julian Greville marries her, he marries one whose foot is in the grave.”

They went on silently, till they reached the turnpike which George had mentioned. Before he shook hands, he said, “I am much obliged to you for what you have told me. I had many fears of the truth, and I will not conceal from you that I have been anxious to ascertain your opinion. You will perhaps be surprised if I say, that I do not think I shall use the information you have given me, either to dissuade Julian from the intended marriage, or to delay it.”

“You must use it as you please, Mr. Vivian. I have done my duty, and perhaps, like you,

I have a spice of romance which would not make me a vehement opposer of the marriage, even under such melancholy circumstances. As it cannot, I think, do harm to Miss Gre-ville, I have not thought it necessary to mention the subject to any of her connexions. Good morning, Mr. Vivian, and I wish I could have been more useful to you. I mean, I wish I could have had the pleasure of your company for some time longer. *Au revoir!*" and he bowed and went on.

As George Vivian re-entered the house at Keevor, and walked along the corridor that led to the ante-room before mentioned, he met Susan in her walking dress, returning from the garden. He had been going in search of her, but for meeting her thus suddenly he was not prepared, and unconsciously he stopped.

His movement showed her that his errand was accomplished—a faint colour passed over her face, but she approached him with a smile as sweet and calm as in her happiest days.

She did not ask any questions—she seemed to wait for him to speak; but he stood silent and immovable.

"Mr. Vivian, you do not fear to tell me what you have heard?" she said, gently.

And for the first time in its full reality that which he *had heard* passed before his mind—entered into his heart. Those soft eyes he should see no more, they would lie closed in the grave—that sweet smile would bless him no more—that voice, whose tones had raised him up, as it were, from death to life, from darkness to the light of day, would die away as a breath of music never to be awakened on earth again. He turned away.

She drew nearer, and held out her hand to him. "I see that I am answered," she said, "and I thank you for answering me; and, indeed, though it is not painful for me to hear, I thank you that it is painful to you to tell. All is right now."

And without a word from him, they met, the tale was told, and they parted again.

That evening Susan said to Julian,—

"Julian, if you knew that I must die—that no human thought or care could save me—if you knew that before many weeks are past, I must be lying in the grave, would you still wish me to be your wife?"

He looked startled, but he did not fully understand what she meant. He answered, earnestly and excitedly—

“If it was to last but for an hour, Susan, I would ask for the blessing of calling you mine.”

“Then it shall be as you wish,” she said, while a soft, sad smile played over her face; “and if it cannot be for a long time, yet, Julian, for a short time I will try to make you happy.”

And as all arrangements had long been completed, the wedding was appointed to take place in ten days from that time.

CHAPTER XXIV.

As he stood,
Even at the altar, o'er his brow there came
The self-same aspect, and the quivering shock
That in the antique oratory shook
His bosom in its solitude.

. . . . And then it faded as it came,
And he stood calm and quiet, and he spoke
The fitting vows—but heard not his own words,
And all things reeled around him.

BYRON.

IT was May-day—such a May-day as one has but once or twice in a century—all the freshness of spring, and the glory of summer, and the softness of autumn combined in one—and this glorious May morning was the morning of Susan's wedding day. I was up early, and threw open my window, and I endeavoured to feel as light and gay as the birds that caroled around the house. I endeavoured to

think of sad hearts healed, of fading life revived, of the weak body strengthened, and the weak mind made whole—but there was a weight upon my heart.

The village clock struck eight, and the village bells rang out a rejoicing peal to greet the bridal morn. I leant upon the window to listen—they chimed as merrily as if there was no sorrow, no death in the world—as if they never had and never would be called upon to peal a knell. But they could not cheer me.

When I went down to breakfast, I found the whole party assembled, with the exception of Julian; and the quiet composure of Susan's countenance banished for a time the oppression of the weight that was upon my heart—but it returned again on Julian's appearance. Breakfast was over—Mr. Greville, who made it a point of honour to wait for all his guests, was becoming fidgety (for he had a bouquet of no ordinary beauty to prepare on that morning); Aunt Janet was fussing herself over the hot rolls and the cold tea, and George Vivian was rising to go in search of him, when the door opened, and he came in, pale, clouded, and

troubled; bearing on his brow the evident traces of uneasy thoughts, and a night of sleeplessness.

“The Late Bridegroom,” announced Aunt Janet, as he closed the door.

He took no notice of her, or of any one else, but, I think unconsciously, drew the empty chair which had been left for him, close to Susan’s side.

“Really, Mr. Julian,” she continued, laughingly, “considering how soon you and Susan are to be united, I think this ebullition of affection might have been spared.”

“He likes to sit by Susan,” said Mr. Greville, apologizing.

“You do not wish papa to wait for you, Julian?” Susan inquired, as she watched her father’s restless glances towards the sunny garden.

“A pretty broad hint to us all,” remarked Aunt Janet, who was in the bantering humour, which I have often observed in unmarried persons on occasions such as the present.—“Mr. George—Mr. Grantley, don’t you hear that we are dismissed. Pray let us take

ourselves off, and leave the lovers to themselves."

And, though not so quickly as Aunt Janet desired, we did, one by one, depart, and they remained alone. Julian was still absorbed in thought.

"I am afraid your tea is cold, Julian," Susan said, her eyes resting on his troubled countenance. "You are very late."

He looked up at her.

"How quiet you seem, Susan," he said, at last, having contemplated her for a few moments, with something of surprise in his tone.

She smiled.

There was another thoughtful silence, then he looked at her again. "Do you not fear the vows, Susan, which are to bind you to such an unquiet spirit as myself?"

"Not unless *you* fear them, Julian," she replied.

He paused again—his brow was clearing. His next question was asked with a smile. "Did you ever read Undine, Susan?"

She shook her head. "No, never."

"It is a story," he continued, musingly, and rather playing with his breakfast than making any progress towards concluding it, "of a water nymph, a child of the elements, fitful, capricious as the elements themselves, and without a soul. She marries a human being, and the soul of the husband passes into the wife, and the wayward creature becomes such a one as you, Susan."

He paused again, then went on, with a smile—"I was thinking, I have often thought before now, that, with a change in the destinies, reversing the circumstances, such a tale might be written about us, Susan. I am like one without a soul; but when I come near to you, your spirit—your still and quiet spirit—passes into mine, and I become what do I become?" and he fell into a meditation again.

"And what is the end of the tale?" she asked, with a smile.

"The husband gives her a soul far better than his own, and so you must do to me; and then" his brow clouded, a vision of Undine and Bertalda, the gentle wife and the

brilliant friend, passed before his mind's eye, and rising hurriedly from the table, he said, "It is a strange and melancholy story, Susan, don't let us think of it any more. I won't detain you any longer;" and throwing open the door, he went into the garden, and they did not meet again till an hour afterwards, when Susan came down in her bridal dress.

I walked with Julian and George Vivian to the church. Julian might well have compared himself to the wayward child of the elements, for anything so strange, wild, and freakish, so full of childish folly and schoolboy tricks, as he showed himself during that morning's walk, I never had witnessed before. It vanished, however—this playful mood of mind—as we suddenly came upon the gay scene in the churchyard, and as the bells, which for a time had been still, perhaps at some signal of his approach, began again their merry chime. The villagers, in their best attire, were assembled from far and near, and the school children, with large baskets of flowers, were standing (by whose direction I could never ascertain).

at the side of the churchyard path, ready to pour their flowers before the feet of her whom they loved as a friend, and reverenced as an angel. It was a gay and a pretty scene; but it seemed incongruous with the prospects of the bride, and I scarcely wondered at the perturbed air with which Julian passed along, and seated himself, with a kind of gloomy resolution, in the porch of the old church. Yet I do not think his thoughts were like mine—the state of Susan's health was little realized by him.

The bells suddenly ceased. The bride was come, and I hastened to assist her and Mr. Greville from the carriage.

Every bride, it is said, looks lovely; and Susan was no exception to the rule. The dress of a bride is in itself so poetical, that it casts a halo over even a very moderate share of youthful grace; and my eyes rested with pride and pleasure; with pride—yes, fleeting as I knew the promise of the hour to be,—on our young bride, as she passed along with downcast eyes and a colour slightly raised, turning here and there a sweet smile on the

young children, who sprang somewhat too boldly into her path.

I do not know why I should linger over this marriage scene; there was little to separate it from a thousand other marriages in the world; and yet, at the time, my fancy dwelt on it with pleasure, and still I contemplate it in memory, a picture such as an imaginative artist might have portrayed as the ideal of a bridal scene.

There was the picturesque old church; the eager, curious faces of the villagers; the venerable old clergyman, and the still more venerable looking father, whose stooping posture and long white hairs spoke of age, but whose calm, unwrinkled face (so often seen in those whose feelings have been of a tranquil kind,) made it an age of beauty. There was the bright stream of light, from the richly stained window, on the group at the altar,—on the bridegroom, whose marvellous, yet troubled beauty, reminded me, at the moment, of some fancy of a fallen cherub; on the fair fading fragile bride; and contrasted with her, in their bright and joyous youth, on the two

childish bridesmaids (granddaughters of the clergyman), who knelt at her feet. And then, a little to the side, the quaint, stiff-looking Aunt, in her dress of half a century old; and one who stood with downcast eyes and folded arms—a picture of concentrated feeling, of resolute will, of “love victorious o'er despair.”

Susan was perfectly herself—

“With trembling steps and humble reverence,
She cometh in before the Almighty's view;”

but Julian was restless still; his voice trembled, as he rather endeavoured to speak than actually spoke the vows; and when the ring was placed in his hand, his fingers shook so nervously, that he dropped it on the cushion beneath his feet,—a circumstance which, I saw, created considerable consternation and stir among the villagers.

But it was over at last; and the last I saw of Julian on that day, was the warm, smiling, cordial, shake hands, with which he parted from George Vivian at the church door. Any action of a decisive nature was painful to him. Unstable as he was, it was

not, perhaps, strange that it should be so. When it was done, he was at peace.

They went home alone. Mr. Greville, happy and placid, walked through the wood. Aunt Janet and I accompanied George Vivian to Llandover, where we remained for a fortnight.

On the morning after our return, Susan received at breakfast a letter, which she read with a heightened colour, and after its perusal, I observed that her eye glanced uneasily towards Julian. She laid it beside her, but when breakfast was over she approached him.

"I have some news from Florence, Julian," she said, looking up in his face.

"Have you, Susan? What is it? May I see?" She put the letter into his hand. 'It was this:—

DEAR SUSAN:—

I AM going to follow your example. Yesterday evening my doom was fixed. I am going to marry Lord Mortimer. He will write to my uncle and guardian for consent,—

to you I only say, don't omit to congratulate me on my *happy* prospects.

“ Your affectionate Cousin,

“ FLORENCE VERE.”

The cold bitterness of the tone had not escaped Susan; it spoke but little of happiness, and she looked anxiously at her husband. He met her uneasy glance, and said, with a smile,—

“ Well, Susan!”

“ Oh, Julian!” she said, gratefully, “ if you can smile, then, indeed, I am happy.”

CHAPTER XXV.

Heavenly hope, towards which the spirit sighs
Its aspirations and is lost again,
'Mid doubts—to grasp the wisdom of the skies,
Too feeble—though convinced earth's bonds are vain,
Cowering faint-hearted in the festering chain.

SIR REGINALD MOHUN.

Are they indeed the bitterest tears we shed,
Those we let fall over the silent dead?

MRS. BUTLER.

HAPPY! Is happiness a thing so pure and divine in its essence that it comes with healing on its wings? has it power to renew the wasted life—to fan afresh the expiring breath—to raise the dead? Is the spirit of love, powerful, as in the first moments of creation, to breathe into the fragile dust the breath of life? So

seemed it then. With never-failing, watchful care, Julian hung over his wife, guarding her that the winds of Heaven should not visit her too roughly: and his care was repaid; the dark shadow cast by, the approach of the angel of death passed away.

I do not know that the improvement was real; I do not know that Dr. Blandford's opinion of his patient actually changed; but I could see that he was surprised, even startled, at the progress which she made; and I,—hasty to fear and sad in anticipation,—even I gazed with wonder on the present, and dared to look on into the future.

Six weeks, six happy weeks, went by, and then—— It must be my task to record the transitoriness of earthly joy—the instability of the human will—the frailty of that divine essence of happiness when it is given to man to bestow. I will hurry on with the short conclusion of my tale.

Why is that which we toil to obtain less grateful when obtained than was the toil that preceded it? Why, when it seemed to be no

longer needful that he should watch every movement of her eye—guard her from every breeze—act for her in every accident of life—why did Julian's gay spirit begin to fail, his restless temper to return? Is it the perverseness, or only the weakness of humanity?

It was not that Julian did not rejoice in his wife's restoration—but when the care was needed no more, he missed the occupation of the care which he had bestowed. Every symptom of returning strength had fallen like sunshine on his heart, chasing, day by day, the clouds of remorse from his mind. He missed this perpetual spring of enjoyment—nay, after a time, I believe he missed his remorse itself. “The love of *sensation* seems to be the ruling appetite of human nature, and many sensations, in which the painful may be thought to predominate, are consequently sought for with avidity, and recollect ed with interest.” If this is true of human nature generally, it was doubly true of Julian. When he did not experience some strong internal emotion, he was a ready prey

to ennui; and at this time, when, for a year or more, he had been agitated by a succession of strong emotions, in which remorse, perhaps, had been the most powerful, his mind, from the force of contrast—from the result of reaction, almost recoiled from the peace of happiness. His repentance was accepted, his wishes gratified, his cares repaid,—what did he ask for more? He knew not; but ask he did. Vague desires, restless wishes, began to stir again within him; and as Cowper says—

“He cannot long be safe, whose wishes roam.”

I do not think Julian was without excuse. All minds are not formed alike, and there are many which fret and pine in the evenness of simple domestic enjoyment. I, myself, when adverse circumstances first called me from a life of idle excitement to the routine of quiet and regular duty, felt my spirit chafe and swell, like the heart of an unwilling nun in her convent cell; and my nature was no more like to Julian’s, than the sun of our temperate clime is to the sun of the burning south. I

am far, then, from thinking him without excuse.

The life at Keevor was quiet in no ordinary degree. Even after the partial restoration of Susan's health, Dr. Blandford was imperative in his commands that all excitement, all fatigue, all movement, should be avoided; and Julian was most docilely obedient, turning a deaf ear when Susan herself argued in favour of a change. It required some strong internal object, feeling, or principle, to keep an excitable mind from sinking into weariness under such circumstances. "But 'tis one thing to be tempted, and another thing to fall."

It was not because he *felt* the want of excitement that I blamed him, but I blamed him that, on the least approach of weariness, he yielded to it at once. What is virtue if it is never put to the proof? Granting that this quiet life, borne for a time for Susan's sake, was a trial and temptation to his nature, what were the fruits of his repentance, if on the first fresh occasion he followed again but where his wayward spirit led him?

With her usual judicious sense, Susan, while entering warmly and eagerly into all those pursuits which interested his imagination, had endeavoured to direct his mind to some employment more stable than these—to something rather of the nature of a task which could not be laid aside at the first moment that its zest was abated. For this purpose she requested him, as a boon to herself, to undertake the management of the property at Keevor, and so requested, he did not fail to consent. It was unfortunate that the nature of the property was not of a very interesting kind; the country was a rich peaceable agricultural country; the people were dull, perhaps, but orderly—though poor, comfortable. There is no doubt that much may always be done in raising the moral character of the peasantry—in refining their habits, in bettering their condition, above all, in cementing that link between the rich and the poor, on which so much of the welfare of England depends, and which cannot be better cemented than by the exhibition of kindly

interest and personal intercourse; but still there were no grand schemes, no prominent features on which his mind could rest and expatiate, and after a short trial he gave up his newly assumed duties in disgust. He was then seized by a passion (prevailing at the moment) for education—read book after book—drew out plans, formed theories—but the fancy was dispelled by the opposition of the old clergyman of the parish, to the introduction of his too exalted ideas in the education of the village children. A mania for farming, not practical but theoretical farming, shared the same fate. The system of agriculture was backward in our neighbourhood. Julian determined to improve it; he took great pains to understand, and then to recommend a new and more advantageous mode of draining. On one occasion he talked with much fluency and eloquence to an old farmer for the space of two hours—patiently answered his objections and enlightened his ignorance; he thought he had achieved a triumph over prejudice; the end of the conversation was a

comfortable assurance from the old bigot—“ Well, sir, you may be right; I don’t gainsay, but I likes the old way best, and *ever shawl.*”

After this Julian’s philanthropic schemes fell to the ground. His disappointment was serious in its effects on his character; the weariness following upon the failure of schemes of philanthropy is the most depressing of all sensations ; for as the object is high, the failure seems to be scarcely merited. It requires more than the mere desire for occupation, to give vigour and strength to a disappointed benevolence ; it requires a principle in which self has no share, or, at least, the lowest share; and alas! even in Julian’s benevolence, self was all in all.

He returned to his own vague desultory employments, and day by day his fits of gloom became more frequent in their recurrence, and more depressing in their effects. In fact, what but some new excitement could rouse a mind thus devoid of principle, and which love and duty, blessings and happiness, were insufficient to satisfy.

Susan was the first to feel that the days of joy were over. It was in her eyes I read that the repose which is given by the consciousness of bestowing happiness was gone. I saw that the doubt of Julian's peace was agitating her heart—that the weight of responsibility was pressing heavily on her mind. I have often asked myself, how was it that she failed. *I* felt that one sweet smile of approval or encouragement from her, animated me for the day; I saw that to George Vivian it was even too potent in its effects, yet Julian received such smiles as were bestowed on none but him, languidly, carelessly—at best but as his due. This question of wherein lies the power to charm, is one which never can be decided, since every varying character will have a different magic to suggest.

There came a day when the full conviction of her insufficiency to his happiness burst upon her mind.

She had been urging him to complete some of his many fragments of verse, written at different times and in different moods; she felt

that an eye more accustomed to criticism than hers might pronounce them to be worthy of admiration. His answer was, to bring a writing-case to her room, in which scraps of paper were tossed together, in a disorder which was but a type of his mind and heart.

"If you can arrange these, Susan," he said, smiling, "you will be as beneficent a fairy as the one that visited the poor girl in 'Order and Disorder'; but, I am afraid, you will find it a hopeless task."

"May I read whatever I find?" she inquired.

"Oh yes; I am not afraid of you. There is a great deal of rubbish—(*I believe*, for I don't very well know what there is)—and that must have your charitable criticism; but I don't think there is anything that you will object to. I am always very good in my verses," he added, playfully.

He left her, and she began to read with a strong sense of enjoyment. In his presence, something of fear and timidity, a sense of inferiority and ignorance, (for which her edu-

cation alone was answerable,) withheld her from the perfect pleasure of sympathy with his high thoughts and soaring imagination; but here she could meet them fearlessly, conscious as she read, that to his best thoughts her own heart could respond, that his high imaginations her own imagination could outsoar. But soon, too soon, enjoyment was over—a cloud began to gather upon her brow as she read, sadness to oppress her soul. The deep tone of melancholy struck its chord painfully upon her heart, for why, she could not but ask, why was he sad?

With the fascination which it is said lures us to destruction, her eye unconsciously seized upon fragment after fragment bearing date since their marriage, and each and all spoke the same language—the language of disappointment and discontent. Possibly, nay, probably, Julian, as he poured out his thoughts, was unconscious of the picture which his verses portrayed; but not the less the picture was there, the too faithful picture of a weary and unsatisfied heart.

At length her eye fell upon the following lines. They were dated only four days back, and were marked with a precision that gave to them peculiar force and meaning.

I give the verses, that my readers may the better judge of the mixture of good and weakness in Julian's nature, and also better realize the trial which this hour brought to the heart of the sad young wife.

Be thou content. The hour too soon may be,
When to the days wherein thou'rt dwelling now,
And dwelling with a clouded shadowy brow,
Thou wilt look back with fondest memory—
Yea, wouldst give all thou hast again to see
The self-same earth and sky above, below,
The self-same forms, now hurrying to and fro,
Whose voices greet thee idly, wearily,
Yea when, though drear it be, *this* present hour,
Thou wouldst give all if thou couldst wake again.
Be thou content. In soft and gentle shower
Upon thy head thy blessings fall like rain.
Wish them not gone. Trust me, ere many years
Thou'l own their sweetness e'en perchance with tears.

Keevor, July 4. Midnight.

Susan read the lines twice over, then laid them down, and pushing the writing-case from before her, with an expression of unutterable

sorrow, buried her face in her hands. A single drop overflows a full cup—her cup of disappointment had long been full; these lines did but set the seal on that which she knew full well, yet had refused to acknowledge before. She was his wife, the wife of not many weeks old, yet already her love weighed as nothing in the scale of his happiness. Hers was the voice that greeted him wearily—hers was the hand which had led him to a dreary life—her heart, her love, her joy were bound up in him; yet she had failed even for a few short weeks of a fleeting life to make him blest.

She had failed. All her cares and prayers, all her watchings and sacrifices, all her love had been in vain. She had failed; and among the many trials common to man, there is none greater than this sense of failure, this powerlessness to bless; bearing as it does for its single burden the sense of humiliation, the weight of fear, the waste of hope, “the pangs of despised love.”

Her heart sank beneath the trial. With a feeling of shuddering fear, she thought of her-

self as a drag upon the existence of him, for whom the expression were but cold and trite, to say that she would have died. She had bound herself to him in the anticipation of death, and now health and strength were returning, and she was destined for months, perhaps for years, to cloud his brow, to oppress his heart, to blight the prospects of his life. Forgetful of the agony of his prayer, she remembered only that her own will had joined with the words he spoke; and, looking backward and forward, her faith and confidence failed, and covering her eyes with her hand, she joined in the passionate prayer of the prophet of old, and requested for herself that she might die.

The trial was a severe one; but who shall say that it was too severe?—who shall say that even her heart, pure and holy as it was, needed not a further purification? Who shall say that in the intensity of watchful love with which she unceasingly gazed upon her husband, something too much of earthly passion had not

penetrated into the purity of her feeling? Who shall say that a desire too intense of earthly happiness—happiness with him, had not insensibly stolen into her soul? I, at least, dare not say that it was not so.

Whatever passes as a cloud between
The mental eye of faith and things unseen,
Causing that brighter world to disappear,
Or seem less lovely, and its hopes less dear,
This is our world—our idol—though it bear
Affection's impress or devotion's air.

The trial was severe, but not insupportable. To minds like hers no trial is insupportable. It was but a further victory over self that was required. It was severe, only as the fire that purifies the silver is severe, bringing more clearly and purely forth the purity of the metal. When the first cloud of anguish passed by, she came forth refreshed and renewed in strength for her earthly duty. The early serenity of her brow returned; there was about her less of the agitating anxiety of mortal love, more of the calm devotion of an undying passion.

From that time, although it was not immediately apparent, I think the progress of improvement in her health was stayed. That last trial was perhaps to her the gentle hand of which Longfellow speaks—

“ Into the silent land
Ah! who shall lead us thither?
Clouds in the evening sky more darkly gather,
And shattered wrecks lie thicker on the strand.
Who leads us with a gentle hand?
Thither, oh ! thither,
Into the silent land.”

I fear my readers may have been disposed to blame me, that at a time when the action of the story should be full and flowing, I have paused to moralize, and to detail the struggles of the mind. But in so doing I have but followed the course of my tale. For three months nothing which I could have recorded as an incident occurred; and yet those months were most important in their consequences. “*Ce ne sont pas les accidens extérieurs qui mesurent et partagent la vie — ce sont les accidens intérieurs, les événemens de la pensée.*”

CHAPTER XXVI.

The monarch o'er the syren hung,
And beat the measure as she sung,
And, pressing closer and more near,
He whispered praises in her ear.
In loud applause the courtiers vied—
The ladies winked, and spoke aside.”

MARMION.

IT was shortly after this time that Lady Mortimer returned with her husband to Mortimer Court, which was situated within five or six miles of Keevor Hall. I know but little of Lady Mortimer, I saw but little of her during her residence in our neighbourhood, but I think I may safely say that her character was not improved by her marriage.

She had married Lord Mortimer out of

pique. When relieved from her first remorse and anxiety about Susan, she had allowed her mind to rest again upon Julian and the future. I think she always over-estimated his feeling for her; perhaps she had cause to do it; and she had persuaded herself that neither Julian nor Susan would be willing, after what had occurred, to fulfil the engagement existing between them. The announcement of their marriage was therefore a blow at once to her pride and to her love. Pride is a great worker of mischief in this world, as perhaps it has also been in the other; it was offended pride which led her thus, forgotten as she felt herself, and neglected, to court afresh the attentions of an often rejected suitor.

Lord Mortimer was the dull respectable man whom she had once mentioned to Susan as being sincerely attached to her. He had been so from very early years, and it needed but a little relaxing of Florence's coldness, but a few, a very few smiles, to bring him again to her feet. He was, as she described him, dull and respectable, and little more—his age

nearly twice her own. I do not know that the marriage need necessarily have been an unhappy one; many a gay and clever woman has made happy, and has been made happy by a very inferior man; we see such unions every day, and though we call them ill assorted, we do not find that they are so. Nor yet do I positively say that the marriage *was* an unhappy one on Lord Mortimer's side, but if it was not so, it was because he so truly loved and admired his wife that she could not be otherwise than perfect in his eyes.

Lady Mortimer was not happy; she had miscalculated, as many have done, her own powers of endurance and forbearance; she had expected to find—the obstinacy on trifling points, the long tedious pointless tales, the habit of fussing on every occasion, great and small—the more trivial the more fuss—infirmitiess for which Lord Mortimer was remarkable—less offensive in a husband than in a lover—and she was disappointed. She would have esteemed and respected him if she could; she had respected him for many good

and amiable qualities before her union with him, but how could she respect, so she asked herself, a man who was listened to by others with suppressed yawns, whose company was avoided, as she plainly saw, by many a trick; whose fussiness provoked even his mother into ill humour. She had married him perfectly conscious of his inferiority and teasing propensities, but after her marriage they fretted her, and though she could have borne to laugh at him herself, she could not bear to see her husband the jest of others.

She said but little—she did outwardly endure—she endeavoured as far as possible to provide for herself separate interests, but what were *her* separate interests who had been accustomed to live only in the light of others; there was a perpetual gnawing restless discontent within, cheered and allayed only by that lowest and poorest of principles, that she must bear it because she must.

I cannot speak of the feelings with which Susan heard of her arrival in the neighbourhood, for if she felt either fear or uneasiness

she made no exhibition of it, and was the first to propose to Julian that they should visit her.

The first meeting was less awkward than might have been expected. Lady Mortimer received her guests without embarrassment, coldly, but with perfect self-possession. To Susan, though cold, she was kind, attentive to her health, and anxious for her comfort; but to Julian she was simply and markedly cold, addressing him only when civility made it necessary, and then with that scrupulous attention, which to those who have been friends, is the most cutting of all distinctions.

Only once did she so far relax as to show anything of her former self.

When Susan rose, at the conclusion of the visit, Florence walked with her towards the door, and paused at a large window which looked out upon the entrance.

“What a lovely little pony-phaeton you have got, Susan,” she exclaimed, animatedly. “I am really jealous of you.”

“A waste of jealousy,” Susan said, smiling; “can you not have one if you wish for it?”

“Perhaps I *could*, but then I should not care about it.” She leant her arms upon the window, and as her eyes wandered over the beautiful and wide-spread demesne which was now her own, and thought how little its beauty or its possession added to her happiness, she sighed a sigh of weariness and discontent.

Susan drew nearer to her, and looking up in her face half kindly, half playfully, said, “Dissatisfied still, Florence?”

“When did you ever know me that I was not dissatisfied, Susan? and I am sure the day will never come when you will cease to see me so. It is my nature and my destiny; but no matter. Good-bye.” She kissed Susan, with a greater approach to cordiality than she had yet shown, but when she turned to Julian, she was the stiff and cold Lady Mortimer once more.

Julian was piqued, but less piqued than hurt. He was as sensitive as a girl of sixteen to the least appearance of slight or neglect from those to whom he felt kindly, and though perhaps he had no reason to expect cordiality

from Lady Mortimer—he had expected it. It was too much his habit to think that he might change, but that others never should.

She returned the visit in the course of a few days, and, owing perhaps to the greater degree of constraint which the return to Keevor, and the revival of old feelings occasioned, her manner was even colder than before.

When she left the room, Julian followed her. He offered her his arm to take her to the carriage, but, with a haughty movement, she declined it, and they walked down the long corridor in silence.

As they reached the end, with a sudden impulse he laid his hand on her arm, and looking up in her face with a reproachful glance, he said softly and earnestly,

“Why this, Florence?”

She shook off his hand, turned away her head, and hurried on to the carriage, but not before Julian had remarked her heightened colour, and seen a tear glistening in her eye.

He turned away in silence, and re-entered the house with a cloud on his brow.

I do not mean to detail the gradual steps by which the intimacy of Julian and Florence was renewed. It *was* renewed; and with the renewal something of her former influence revived. This influence (if in so subtle and complex a creature as man we can make the distinction) was rather over his mind than over his heart. An influence equally dangerous, I do not deny; but I mean that neither now nor at any other time did she displace the hold which I am persuaded Susan had over his best affections. She amused and excited him, and the temptation of the amusement and excitement he could not resist. Her attractions were, in fact, very great. There was an animation, a fascination in her conversation which I have rarely seen equalled—the peculiarity of her phraseology, the fearless *abandon* with which she spoke, maintaining, at the same time, a certain degree of distance and reserve, the half grace, half *brusquerie* of her manner—all these, even without her beauty, had their charms;—she excited you to perpetual interest; even when she herself was melancholy, she forced you to be gay.

In the beginning of September, a large party assembled at Mortimer Court, brought together by the commencement of the shooting season. Lady Mortimer, anxious to amuse, and glad to be amused, was in gay spirits, and Julian partook in the pleasure which the gaiety of the house afforded. He was not usually fond of mixed society. He was too shy, and too sensitive, to feel at his ease with those who were careless or indifferent about him; but at this time, partly, perhaps, because the occupation of unceasing, though unconscious conflict in his mind, made him less sensitive to trifles, partly because he did excite a considerable degree of attention, he learned to delight himself in it. His visits to Mortimer Court increased in frequency, and became, not only on Florence's account, an object and attraction to him.

His spirits rose, his temper cleared and righted itself, but, in causing this restoration, his young, fading, fragile wife, had no share. She could not partake in his pleasures. The chill of autumnal breezes was confining her to the house, and, to my eyes, the wan transpa-

rency of her complexion, and other sad and boding signs, were beginning to appear again. Julian did not perceive the change. He was far from neglecting Susan; he was always kind and attentive to her,—sometimes so tender and empressé, that her colour went and came at every word he said. But still his days of watchfulness were over. He was unaccustomed, too, to mark the signs of disease; he had been lulled into a false security; there were many excuses to be made for his blindness, and I am far from denying them;—I am often more inclined to blame my own silence,—and yet Dr. Blandford still spoke gaily and cheerfully,—spoke of a tour for the spring of the following year,—planned it with Julian, who entered eagerly into the idea;—and what was I—to come with my unwelcome and uncertain words of warning? I was silent; but my heart misgives me for my silence still.

One day, towards the latter end of September, Julian called at Mortimer Court early in the afternoon. He found Florence and her

guests eagerly discussing the arrangements of a plan which had been proposed a day or two before, for acting some scenes from an opera at that time new, and still deservedly popular.

The scheme had been suggested by a Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont, a sister and brother-in-law of Lord Mortimer's. They were of that class of people who are called “great acquisitions in a country house;” very musical, very fond of talking, very fond of acting—in short, very fond of doing something;—and their scheme had taken Lady Mortimer's fancy more than other suggestions of her other guests.

When Julian was announced, Florence said to Mrs. Beaumont,—

“ You were in trouble for a tenor, Eleanor; here is one, and such a one as is not to be met with every day.”

Mrs. Beaumont turned her head towards the door. “ A perfect Master of Ravenswood in appearance!” she exclaimed. “ My dear Florence, where did you pick up such a treasure?—

“ Vraiment, si son ramage
Se rapporte à son plumage,”

he will prove a phœnix indeed.”

“ *You* must ask him to take the part,” Florence said, hastily; “ I shan’t.”

And after introducing Julian to her sister-in-law, she went with Mr. Beaumont and some others to the pianoforte.

Mrs. Beaumont unfolded the scheme to Julian in a few words. “ You know the opera, of course?” she inquired, as she concluded.

“ No;” he shook his head. “ I have not been singing much of late.”

“ But have you never heard it, Mr. Greville? You must be a savage. London has been raving about it all the season.”

“ We are savages in these parts,” Julian said, laughing slightly. “ I have neither heard it, nor heard of it.”

Mrs. Beaumont looked rather contemptuous. “ It is no matter,” she said; “ you know the story from Walter Scott’s novel—*Lucia di Lammermoor*. We have got a Lucia—not so fair a one as could be wished, but perfect in

everything but poor Lucy's golden locks. We only wait for a Ravenswood—an Edgardo; and you, Mr. Greville, have been fixed upon to take that prominent part."

Julian started, and coloured; then firmly and decidedly declined. He had not sung with Florence since the renewal of their intimacy; he had even piqued himself on the wisdom and prudence of his determination not to do so. There was no hesitation in his manner now. Less by thought than by impulse he felt that his duty commanded him to decline the offer.

"Nay, Mr. Greville," said Mrs. Beaumont, "we take no denial; in these schemes everybody must do what they can do."

She pressed and pressed again, but Julian remained firm in his refusal.

Angry at her failure, Mrs. Beaumont called to Lady Mortimer.

"My powers of persuasion have failed, my dear Florence; come and try what you can do."

"No, indeed," she replied, with cold carelessness,

nessness, “I never press. Mr. Greville must do as he pleases; and if he will not take the part, we must look for somebody else. I dare say we shall not have much difficulty.”

Why did Julian’s resolution begin to waver? He said nothing, however, and the subject dropped.

Shortly afterwards, Florence sat down to the pianoforte, and, with her perfect execution and deep feeling, sang the beautiful air—“Spargi d’amaro pianto.”

In an ecstacy of admiration Julian left his seat and approached her. She did not immediately notice him, but began to talk to Mr. Beaumont. After a few minutes, however, she placed a duet, from the opera of *Lucia*, on the music-desk, and looking round at Julian, who stood behind her, said, with laughing command, “Now, Mr. Greville, sing.”

And, without waiting for a refusal, she began. He followed instinctively. The duet was the one beginning, “Sulla tomba,” a temptation, no doubt, to the lovers of music from its own beauty.

The singing of both was really beyond common praise, but they were gratified at the sensation which they excited, and at the admiration expressed by those whose ears were accustomed to be critical.

"I can't attempt to speak my admiration, Florence," exclaimed Mrs. Beaumont; "I only wish I was more of a syren myself, that I might have some share in detaining Mr. Gre-ville, will he, nill he, as the old writers say."

I suppose it will be guessed that Julian's resolution gave way. He gave his consent, and his consent given, he became more excited than any in the scheme. He sang again with Florence to an admiring audience—the audience vanished, and he sang with her alone. And again he sat by her side, and hung upon her melodious notes, and watched the kindling brilliancy of her eyes; and again he caught from her eager, animated words—thought, feeling, excitement, all that to him was life.

It was late when he returned home. The dressing bell had already rung. Though dissatisfied with himself, he was pleased and

carried away—though conscience was not silent, its voice was drowned in the sweet echoes of the notes that still were lingering upon his ear; and, glad to postpone his confession to a public opportunity, he merely knocked at Susan's door, and desired her not to wait for him.

At dinner he intended to speak, but deferred his communication again and again, until it was forced from him by George Vivian, who had arrived at Keevor the day before.

“I want you to ride with me to-morrow afternoon, Julian. I have just heard of a farm which I think will suit me exactly. It is six miles from here, but that is not at all too far. Mr. Heath, who has sent to me about it, says I must bid for it without delay, so you must come with me, and tell me if it has your approval.”

Julian said, with some hesitation, that he should be unable to go; then gathering boldness, added, with affected carelessness,—

“I am going to Mortimer Court; they are going to perform some scenes from an opera, and I have promised to take a part.”

George Vivian looked surprised and annoyed, but he said nothing.

"I saw an opera once," remarked Mr. Greville; "it was all about fairies, and there was a king of the fairies—it was very pretty. I am sure, Julian, poor Susan will be very glad to see you act—so shall I. When is it to be?"

"Humph!" said Aunt Janet, loudly; "and what part are you to take, Mr. Julian, if I may ask?"

"The opera is called *Lucia de Lammermuir*," he said, without directly answering her question; "it is founded on Walter Scott's novel of the *Bride of Lammermoor*."

"My dear Mr. Julian, we know that; the papers have been full of nothing else. I am quite sick of the subject. I am sure I often wonder how they can have the face to make us pay for such trash."

"You are more learned than I am, Aunt Janet; I never heard of it."

"Never heard of it! really, Mr. Julian, what do you use your intellect for? You

have one, I suppose, like other people? Never heard of it!—good gracious; Mr. George, what do you think of that? Perhaps you have never heard of it, either?"

"Don't flatter yourself," he said, smiling; "I know as much about it as you do."

"And pray, Mr. Julian," she continued, returning to her point, "what part are you to take? Are you to enact the hapless lover,—Monsieur Edgardo, or whatever they call him?"

"Yes," he said, shortly and coldly.

"Humph!" remarked Aunt Janet, in a tone louder than before.

Susan took no part in the conversation; nor, though Julian glanced uneasily at her, did she once raise her eyes to his face. By no expression of surprise, annoyance, or reproach, could I read that she disapproved of her husband's intention.

Often since her marriage, judging, perhaps, as a man, and not as a wife, I had felt inclined to cavil at the gentleness and sweetness with which she bore with his weaknesses and follies.

I began to distrust her judgment now, but I little understood her.

As she passed Julian, on leaving the dining-room, she said,—

“If I am not in the drawing-room when you have done dinner, will you come up to my room? I will have a good fire for you.”

He looked at her with some anxiety and annoyance. He was, doubtless, well aware that she would not approve of the scheme, and he would have preferred to fight it out with her in public; but he never refused her requests, and he nodded, though rather sullenly, his acquiescence. I believe the acting itself had taken a strong hold upon his fancy. It was the very thing to suit him,—an amusement in every way formed for his talents and disposition.

He went to his wife’s room prepared for reproaches, but in a mood of strong determination to have his own way. He found her sitting on the sofa, by a blazing fire; the room bright, and the picture of comfort.

“You have kept your promise, Susan,” he

said, laughing; “I will roast myself to my heart’s content;” and he drew a chair to the front of the fire, and sat down before it.

She smiled, but seriously, and as one who had something on her mind; then bending a little forwards said, gently,—

“I suppose you guess, Julian, that I wish to speak to you about this opera?”

“What do you want to say about it, Susan?” he replied, taking up the poker, and beginning to tap upon the hob, a very favourite occupation with him.

“Do you not guess,” she said, with a faint smile, “that I wish to interfere with your pleasure?”

“No, indeed, Susan, I guess no such thing!” He spoke in a very resolute tone.

“But I must,” she said, seriously; “you once asked me, Julian, to warn you and guide you, when you yourself did not see clearly. I must do so now; indeed, Julian, this will be a dangerous pleasure for you; if you think, I am sure you will see that it must be so.”

“Some people think all pleasures dan-

gerous," he observed, petulantly; "but that is not my creed. Amusement is sometimes needed, even by the very best; and the very best I don't profess to be." His cause was too weak a one to bear argument, but he could escape to generalities. This is often the course of obstinacy in the weak, and Julian was beginning to be obstinate.

"I am not one of those," replied his wife; "and, indeed, dear Julian, I grieve continually that your life here is not as bright and as happy as it should be. You must not think that I would urge you to give up this pleasure, because it is a pleasure; but only because it is one too dangerous to be a lasting pleasure to you. Dear Julian, ask yourself, is there not danger in it?"

He made no answer, but continued, with the same resolved air, to tap the poker upon the bars.

"Julian," she continued, more seriously and earnestly, "you must forgive me for forcing my advice upon you; you know," her voice slightly, very slightly, trembled, "that you

are weak where Florence is concerned; and Florence, also—if not for yourself, Julian, will you not consider for her,—once you destroyed her peace; Oh! Julian, will you do it again?"

"Susan," he said, turning his face towards her, with a serious inquiring look, "are you jealous?"

"No, not jealous," she replied, in a tone of calm sadness, which went to Julian's heart. But something of pride, something, too, of kindness, which would have endeavoured to prove by braving the danger that there was none, made him hesitate in yielding to her wish.

There had been a moment's wavering, but Susan feared that she saw on his countenance returning determination. "Oh, Julian!" she exclaimed, imploringly, rising from her seat and laying her hand on his shoulder, while an expression of pain and fear for a moment clouded her brow,—"do not make me too bitterly repent the weakness which has, I fear, destroyed your happiness, and, perhaps, Florence's also."

She rarely, very rarely, spoke or thought of her own feelings. I have sometimes fancied that Julian would have appreciated her character better if she had done so. Some minds can scarcely understand that total rising above selfish happiness which characterized Susan. The effect of her voice, the look of unwonted emotion and anxiety on her countenance, was immediate now.

“Oh, Susan!” he exclaimed, sadly and reproachfully, “if you say that, I cannot do it. But you should not so mistrust me.”

“I do not mistrust you, dear Julian,” she replied, anxiously; “I know that you would ever do what is right and best if you felt it to be so. But we are all so weak where our wishes are concerned,—so blind, too,—indeed, indeed, Julian, I only mistrust you as I mistrust myself; as I have had cause to mistrust myself.” And a painful colour flitted over her face.

He looked at her with a more curious and anxious interest than he had lately done; then, without speaking, sat down and wrote

a short and decided note to Lady Mortimer, declining the part which had been proposed for him; and he was sincere—but oh,

“ Variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made.”

CHAPTER XXVII.

Trust not the forward path again,
 Oh ! forward step and lingering will ;
Oh ! loved and warned in vain,
 And wilt thou perish still ?

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

THE following day, after luncheon, I, and Susan, and Julian, were in the drawing-room. Julian was waiting for George Vivian, with whom he was to ride. Susan was lying on the sofa. She was looking much as usual, but of late she had begun to take more constant and anxious care of herself. She was nursing her life for Julian's sake, as she would have nursed him. She felt that she had an influence over him which none other possessed; and sometimes shrinking as she looked into

the future, she would not that one act of negligence or carelessness on her part, should deprive him of a guide before the time. There had been one weak, passionate prayer to die, quickly repented of and recalled; and now, since Florence had returned, as passionate would have been her prayer to live.

Julian was standing by the fire, thoughtfully. Perhaps his thoughts were at Mortimer Court, taking part in the excitement and preparation there.

“Mr. George, as Aunt Janet calls him,” he said at last, looking up, “is taking his time. If there is a thing that overturns my temper, it is being kept waiting.”

As he spoke, a servant came into the room with a note.

Julian coloured as he took it, and walked to a little distance. When he had read it over, he stood for a moment with his brows knit, then suddenly threw it down, and left the room.

It was a note from Lady Mortimer, written in a tone half of pique and half of playfulness,

refusing to take his denial, and desiring him to come immediately to Mortimer Court. The command was worded in a determined tone, such as Florence well knew that Julian had little power to resist.

His voice reached us from the corridor, calling for his hat.

I looked at Susan: she understood it too well. For a moment she sat silent, while her cheek became deadly pale, and her heart began to beat. The next instant she had followed him.

Her soft voice fell upon me clear and distinct—“ Julian !”

But it did not reach his ears.

It was raised again, more imploringly; then followed a silence—such a silence as makes one’s heart beat with expectation. It was broken by a shriek of agony, which still is ringing on my ears; and a moment afterwards Julian staggered into the room, bearing in his arms the pale, death-like form of his young wife.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

My wife ! what wife ? I have no wife.
Oh ! insupportable ; oh ! heavy hour.

OTHELLO.

Yet fell she not as one enforced to die,
Ne died with dread and grudging discontent,
But as one toiled with travel, down doth lie,
So lay she down as if to sleep she went,
And closed her eyes with careless quietness,
The whiles soft death away her spirit hent,
And soul assoyled from sinful fleshliness.

SPENSER'S DAPHNAIDA.

IT is sometimes necessary that we should face the consequences of our faults, before we can learn that *Error is infinite*. Poor Julian was destined to drink to the dregs the cup of bitterness purchased for him, by that weakness which in his early years was a failing so

small, that it had been hard to distinguish it from gentleness and kindness of disposition.

An hour afterwards, Susan opened her eyes; but Death's approaching shadow was already stealing over her pale features.

Julian was kneeling at her side, her hand in his, his face convulsed with fear and agony.

"Susan!" he exclaimed, as her long lashes slowly and heavily were raised,—his tongue cleaving to his mouth, his voice a husky whisper—"Susan! my wife, my angel wife!"

She smiled on him with a smile of ineffable sweetness.

"Oh! Susan," he exclaimed again, "forgive, forgive me!"

She turned her pitying, loving eyes upon his agitated countenance, and gathering power, softly murmured, "Ah! Julian, do you think it would be hard?"

"Then live," he cried, in a voice of agony, "live, Susan, live to forgive and bless me."

"Julian! dearest Julian!" she said, raising her feeble head, and pressing her cold lips on his brow, "I may not live, but dying, I bless you."

He gazed at her, a mist swimming before his eyes, the veins in his temples throbbing and swelling as if they would burst; then dropping his head upon the bed, his hand relaxed from its grasp, and gently sinking, he fell senseless upon the floor.

George Vivian and I, who, with some others, were standing in the passage, hoping against hope, (for well we knew that hope was over,) were summoned hastily by Bessie, to the bedside of her mistress. We raised Julian from the floor and bore him from the room, Susan following him with eyes of love and sorrow—and they met no more.

We laid the unfortunate young man upon a couch near a window, and endeavoured to restore him; but it was no common swoon which had overpowered him. George Vivian was hanging anxiously over him when Bessie again appeared, with a request from Susan that he would go to her.

He obeyed.

As he approached, she held out her hand to him, and with an instinctive feeling he knelt by her side.

She appeared to have somewhat rallied, and strengthened herself for all she had to do; and her voice, though soft, was clear and steady as she addressed him.

“ George,” she began; at Julian’s desire she had called him by that name since her marriage, but never had it so thrilled his heart as now it did—“ you must be kind to Julian; he will need all your love and care; promise me that you will be a brother, and more than a brother to him.”

“ I will,” he said, in a deep, low tone,—full and expressive as the words of the marriage vow.

“ Do you know what I mean?” she cried, and her soft tones became high and shrill, in the agony of her prayer. “ You must pity him, you must not think harshly of him: for one moment’s weakness, for my, perhaps, too great fearfulness, he has been awfully punished. Oh! George, you must not judge him—you must not let him judge himself by the punishment—you must comfort, not condemn.” A tear fell slowly down her pale cheek.

“ I will strive to be to him what you would have been,” he said, steadily; then taking her hand, and looking up in her face, as if—it was vain to strive, once, though but once, though in death it should be spoken—he continued, in tones of strong, but mastered passion—“ And Susan, that you may trust me, that you may know that no word of yours can ever be forgotten, let me speak this once:—I have loved you, I shall love you till death. In life I have striven against it; but now—can it be a sin to love you now?” And he bowed down his head upon her hand.

A faint blush flitted over her pale cheek. Poor blighted heart! I know not—it may have been comfort, even in the hour of death, to feel that not to all had the treasure of her love been as a valueless thing. I know not—she made no remark upon what he had said.

“ Dear George,” she answered, gently, “ I have no power to thank you for all your kindness to Julian and to me, but, if it may be permitted to dying lips to say such words,—it will not be forgotten.”

Her pitying eyes rested upon him also, for a moment, and then she bade him farewell.

A few hours later, a housemaid hurriedly told me that Mrs. Greville had called for me.

I entered the chamber of death, and I saw with one glance that death indeed was there. The curtains were put back from the bed, and the fading sunlight was falling on the sharpening but angelic features. At the foot of the bed Aunt Janet sat, stiff and stern in her sorrow, but truly sorrowful still. At a little distance on the opposite side, Bessie was kneeling, with her face buried in her hands—a picture of mute despair. While action was necessary, her mind, her love, her courage, had never failed—but there was no call for action now. She whom her care had nursed in sickness and in health—raising from the drooping childhood a fair though fragile flower, she was passing away to a home where her cares could follow her no more. A little behind her stood the old clergyman of the parish, and

his cares and services were also at an end—all but one.

I paused at the threshold, but Susan faintly motioned to me to approach. Her father was sitting by her side, and holding her hand, but as I drew nearer and read his countenance, I saw that the smile with which he was gazing upon her was a smile of vacancy. The shock of the day had been too great—the signs of death on that loved face too speaking and too awful—the feeble intellect had given way, and I saw that he was looking his last upon his child without a pang.

I approached her and stood by her bed. She raised her eyes to mine, and murmured some words, so faint, so low, I heard them not—no matter. Those loving eyes told me all I cared to know—that in death she trusted me. She proved her trust. Raising her father's hand, and simply pressing it to her lips as she resigned it, fearing it seemed to agitate him by any sign of a last parting—she placed it in mine, fixing the while upon my face a long, serious, imploring gaze. I under-

stood it well, and never, never, I trust, have I been unfaithful to that silent prayer.

I attempted to draw him away, perceiving such to be her desire; but Mr. Greville stood spellbound—unconscious that he was leaving her for ever; yet, as if tied to the spot where she lay.

With an effort Susan raised herself, and, clear and distinct, I heard her voice once more and for the last time—"Papa, you will go with Mr. Grantley, now. He will stay with you, and, only remember that we shall meet again."

And, obedient to her voice, docile as a child, he followed me. He never knew that he had lost her.

She died a quarter of an hour afterwards, no loving husband gathering up the fragments of her expiring life.

In another room Julian lay senseless still, George Vivian by his side.

"Sigh not, ye winds, as passing o'er
The chambers of the dead ye fly,
Weep not, ye dews, for they
No more shall ever sigh.

Why mourn ? the troubled heart's at rest ;
How still it is within thy breast.
Why mourn ! since death presents us peace,
And in the grave our sorrows cease."

So did I muse as we followed the remains of Susan Greville to the grave, the chill damp breeze of an autumnal day timing our footsteps with its sorrowful sighing as we passed along. We could not mourn ; we could not wish that she who so had felt the sorrows of mortality, that the strings of life were shattered as they swept over her, should again be a suffering child of earth ; and yet

Never, except upon this occasion, did I ever see George Vivian's calm and strong endurance give way. He stood for a time stern and immovable ; but when the cheerful innocent voices of the village children suddenly burst forth, chanting the anthem for the dead, it seemed as if he could bear no more—it was like the bursting of a broken heart.

There were, indeed, in the occasion itself, circumstances so touching, that they would have gone to the heart of a stranger.

By the grave of her whose eyes had loved whate'er they looked upon, no father, no husband, bent—none who were bound to her by those holy ties, which are tied in heaven. We two were there, and none, perhaps, by the right of our love, had a dearer right. But what were we to her?—strangers in blood; friends, grateful friends, but no more.

And there she was laid—by the side of him whose life, judging as man judges, would have saved her from a hapless fate; and the calm but sorrowful voice that rose above her head was the voice of one, himself sinking into the grave, whose arms had received her in her infancy, and who, but a few short months before, had spoken with trembling hope her marriage blessing.

But it is enough—we left her there, and returned to life again.

CHAPTER XXIX.

I charge you by the smile that hung
Upon her eyes in their eclipse
That to her deep dark lashes clung,
And looked so sweet and stayed so long,
And waned so slowly on her lips—

To seek within the cloistered pale
Of sorrow a sequestered cell,
Nor ever stray beyond the vale
That catches on the passing gale
Her low sweet convent bell.

DE VERE.

FOR three weeks after Susan's death the hush of death itself reigned in her home, broken only by the ravings of delirium.

Julian had passed from his deep swoon to the madness of a brain fever, and day and night, for one and twenty days, he remained

restless and senseless, turning from side to side his wild, wakeful, feverish eyes—now raving incoherently—now calling upon Susan in heart-rending accents—now laughing with Florence with a madman's laugh.

George Vivian never left him, except for the hour of Susan's funeral. How his strength endured it, I know not, but endure it he did.

The fever ceased at last, and that deep, heavy sleep fell upon him which leads at once to life or to death. It lasted for many hours, and often the faint breathing seemed altogether to die away; but at length the deep, senseless sleep passed, changed that is, imperceptibly and gradually, to the sleep of returning health, and he awoke—*himself*.

It was an hour which George Vivian had dreaded; and when he saw the first symptom of the unclosing eyes, he sat down in silence and out of sight.

The hush that followed seemed a long one—it was broken at last, and broken by the name which George expected, yet dreaded to hear.

“Susan!”—It was a soft, faint, whispering

call, but thrilling that silent room with the clearness of music.

He made no answer.

Another pause, and the call was repeated.

George slowly undrew the curtain, and stood by the bedside.

Julian glanced at him for a moment, but as if he did not recognise him, and again his eyes wandered round, and again he called for her who had ever been ready at his lightest breath.

“Susan cannot come to you, Julian,” George said at last, sadly, but steadily.

The wandering eyes were stilled. George stooped over him, and Julian looked into his face with a fearful, questioning glance. No words were spoken; but as he gazed, a flush stole over his pale, emaciated brow, and then he turned away his head, and closed his eyes—and he never asked for Susan more.

It has been said, that temporary madness is often necessary (as fever is to the body) to cleanse and renovate the mind. In some such

thought, in some such hope of its effects, we had watched over Julian's insanity—nor were we altogether disappointed; and if the madness was advantageous, much more was the weakness, the days, and weeks, and months of weakness that followed, effectual in the strengthening and renovating his weak, but not unfruitful nature. He learned to think—not to think only carried away with the thought of the moment,—in such a way he always had thought much—but now he learned to reflect. Not to own only, but to ponder upon his weakness—not to grieve only, but to repent.

“ Grief only strikes the heart
That has some gold mixed with its baser metal.

. Most men

The angel passes by, as he disdained
To temper with the eisel and the gall
Their coarser clay. For they have eyes and see not,
Ears that hear not, and hearts that cannot bleed.”

Julian was not one of this coarser clay. Blind and deaf, indeed, he had been; but the gold appeared at last. The angel of grief,

pitiful as Susan herself, left him not till the mine of purer metal was found within.

He recovered very slowly—perhaps the more slowly, that he recovered silently. Of all the inward anguish that was making his heart bleed, for the first time in his life he said nothing. He would lie for hours in deep thought—rarely seeming to wish to speak—rarely asking to be occupied or entertained. His own thoughts appeared to be enough; and, judging from the occasionally flushed cheek, and too sparkling eye, more than enough.

On his return from his first drive, when laid again upon the sofa to rest, he said to his constant companion and attendant,—

“ To-morrow, George, I go to Mortimer Court.”

George Vivian did not object, but he looked anxious and uneasy.

“ Do you disapprove, George?” Julian inquired, calmly.

“ Not disapprove, if you are equal to the visit; but I fear, Julian, you are hardly fit to bear excitement yet.”

"It will be no excitement," he replied, in the same tranquil tone, though a faint colour did pass over his cheek as he spoke. "I would not go if I thought it would do me harm. I do not wish to die. I think you may trust me."

George Vivian objected no more. He felt, and justly, that expectation is more exciting to many natures than action.

The following day he drove with Julian to Mortimer Court, remaining in the carriage while his companion entered the house.

Julian sent up a note requesting to see Lady Mortimer alone. The house was full of people, he was therefore shown into Florence's own sitting-room.

Lady Mortimer had suffered deeply—very deeply; but not, like Julian, in silence and in quietness. Thought was insupportable to her. She was too unhappy for thought, and she drove it away. Though ignorant of all the circumstances attending Susan's death, conscience was not slow to speak, and she endeavoured to drive away the haunting image of

her cousin's pale, and, as she last had seen it, anxious face, and the still more haunting thoughts of Julian—regrets for what was—pictures of what might have been—in amusement and distraction.

In part she was successful; and dreading lest her slumbering conscience should awake again, she heard of Julian's coming with reluctance and regret.

Too proud, however, to betray her feelings, she veiled her reluctance to meet him under an air of haughtiness; and her step was stately, and her countenance cold and composed, as she entered the room where she had appointed to meet him. But at the door she paused.

She was, as was usual to her, gaily, though tastefully dressed, and if sad and harassing thoughts had been hers, they had not impaired the brilliancy of her loveliness. And there, in contrast to herself, Julian stood, in his deep mourning dress—his figure drooping from weakness—his cheek sunken and pale—his eyes, more brilliant from illness, more ex-

pressive from suffering, resting upon her with sorrow, and, her conscience said, with reproach.

She turned away her head.

He came quietly towards her, and held out his hand. She took it, with her face averted, and seated herself on the sofa in silence.

He placed himself before her, and leaning with one arm against the chimney-piece, he contemplated her with a calm, sad gaze.

"I am come, Florence," he said, at last, "to ask you to forgive me."

She started. "I have nothing to forgive!" she replied, faintly.

"Nothing! Florence,—oh, think again!" and he drew nearer to her, and looked more earnestly in her face.

She trembled, but shook her head.

"Dear Florence, would I could believe it, but I know too well. Oh, ask yourself—is your heart as light, is your conscience as innocent, as it was before you knew me one short year ago?"

"They are not—they are not!" she cried

vehemently; and dropping her face in her hands, she burst into a passion of tears.

"I have been," he continued, with a certain excitement of manner, which betrayed that the powers of the mind and brain were not yet fully restored—"I have been like the wind of the desert, carrying blight and death to all whom I loved, and to all who loved me, and therefore, Florence, before we part, perhaps for ever, I would hear you say that I am forgiven."

"Part, Julian!" she cried, in a piercing tone, withdrawing her hands, and gazing with terror upon his altered countenance, "you will not *die*."

"No, Florence," he said, shaking his head, "not, at least, if I may live. I am not fit to die. I would live to redeem my wasted life; but, not the less, our paths are separate, and I am come to bid you farewell." He approached her, and taking hold of her hand, continued, in that low melodious tone which had too often and too deeply reached her heart of yore—"I do not speak of forgetting; dear Florence, I shall not, and I would not that you

should forget all that these months have taught us. It is not for me to speak—God knows I have no right; but, Florence, one whom we have known has a right to speak to us—to warn us of weakness, to bid us beware of temptation. Will you not listen to *her*? She loved you once—she loves you still."

She was weeping too bitterly to answer him.

" Nay, Florence," he said, tenderly, " I did not come to make you wretched; you must not weep thus."

But still she wept. The barriers built by pride and heartless mirth had given way before the re-awakening of conscience, before the tenderness of his voice, before the thought of parting with him for ever.

He said no more. He felt that it was better for both that he should be gone.

" God bless you, Florence," he said, earnestly; and gently kissing the hand he held, he left the room.

I do not think that they have ever met again.

CHAPTER XXX.

It may be the case, that they who are the tares to-day, shall be the wheat to-morrow.

ST. AUGUSTINE.

So choicest drugs in meanest shrubs are found,
So precious gold in deepest centre dwells,
So sweetest violets trail on lowly ground,
So richest pearls lie closed in vilest shells.

PHINEAS FLETCHER.

THE “slow, sweet hours” that brought us all things good are past and gone; gone, too, are the “slow sad hours” that brought us so much ill. It remains but to bring all things good from evil, and, happily, the task is not a hard one.

I am sitting in silence and alone in the deserted walls of Keevor Hall, (for Mr. Gre-

ville survived his daughter but three years, and even Aunt Janet's vigorous life has yielded to the strong, stern hand of death,) but the feelings with which I have recalled the past are not those of sadness, neither do I mourn the early fate of Susan Greville with those regretful, pitying thoughts which are so often excited by the loss of the young and the gifted.

She had a work to do, and she did it,—if not in life, yet in death. What would we ask more, for her or for ourselves? It seemed as if a peculiar blessing was attached to her love, her voice, her glance, her smile; wheresoever they fell, flowers, as to the soft rain of spring, were destined to shoot up.

When Julian recovered his health, such a temper of zeal, such a fire of repentance was burning in his heart, that the common duties of life were unable to satisfy him. He had a project, not only suggested but formed, to sell all that he had, and, free from the ties of

wealth and property, to go as a missionary to a heathen land.

But this plan George Vivian opposed. He did not speak generally but individually, when he said that he looked upon such a desire to shift his duties simply as a temptation. It was not the excitement of zeal, not the impulse to attain perfection, that Julian wanted,—it was not a great and momentary sacrifice, that would cost him anything,—it was steadiness in temptation, patience in failure, perseverance under disappointment, and for these the duties that lay in his path gave ample scope.

Julian yielded: he had become at last humble and distrustful of himself; and he placed himself under the guidance of one who had showed himself so true a friend, while he endeavoured to do his duty patiently and quietly in that state of life to which he was called.

Gradually his sphere has been enlarged; for in him is that spark which cannot be concealed,—once taught to burn steadily, its brightness is for the world.

There is often a question of influence: some, to attain it, would sacrifice even virtue itself. But the lesson we learn from such a life as that of Susan Greville tells a truer tale. If there are at the present day two young men,—still young, though the flower of their youth has passed away,—the one distinguished by the vigour of his judgment, the soundness of his views, the steadiness of his principles,—the other by the fire of his eloquence, the loftiness of his conceptions, the glory that seems to encircle him,—both, by the ardour of their charity, the purity of their lives, the warmth, and truth, and strength of their benevolence,—these have been formed, humanly speaking, by the gentle, undying influence of the quiet, retiring, simply-educated Susan Greville.

ADA MOWBRAY:

OR,

Pride.

Weep not for broad lands lost,
Weep not for fair hopes crost,
Weep not though limbs wax old,
Weep not though friends grow cold,
Weep not though death should part
Thine and the best loved heart;
But weep—weep all thou can—
Weep—weep, because thou art
A sin-defiled man.

R. C. TRENCH.

ADA MOWBRAY.

CHAPTER I.

The child is father to the man.

WORDSWORTH.

“DON’T do that, Miss Mowbray—you are not to pull the flowers about in that way.”

“Who says I am not to do it?” replied a very pretty, but very haughty-looking little girl, of nine or ten years old.

“Mr. Dickson says so, Miss Mowbray—he says it takes a man’s whole time to follow you about, picking up your rubbish—he says he had far rather a whole regiment of horse walked through his garden of a morning—so do be quiet, Miss Mowbray, and leave the flowers alone.”

"But, supposing I *choose* to do it, for all that Dickson says, who is to stop me?"

"I don't know about *choose*, Miss Mowbray—somebody else can say *choose* as well as you—I only know that Mr. Dickson says he won't bear it no longer, and if you make any more litter, he will go with a regular complaint to your papa and your mamma, and then we shall see about *choose*. Now, don't do it, Miss Mowbray; how can you be so *mischeevious*?"

"I tell you what, Dorothy, some day this garden, and these flowers, and all the house, and everything will be mine—Papa says so; and I shall have servants and gardeners all of my own, and I shall make them do just what I please; and the very first thing I shall do will be to send Dickson away, and you may tell him so."

"You shall do just what you please, then, Miss Mowbray, and I daresay Mr. Dickson will be very glad to go, if you grow up making a litter and spoiling the flowers in this way; but now you must do what Mr. Dickson pleases, and he says he won't bear your naughty

tricks no longer. Leave the flowers alone, Miss Mowbray. You're not to touch them, I tell you. Come along, you wicked *mischeevious* little thing," and she rudely seized the hand of her charge.

"Let go my hand, Dorothy—you hurt me," said the little girl, calmly. The nursery maid released her with a slight shake. "Now," she continued, while her face crimsoned with passion, "now, see whether I will do what Dickson pleases," and with a bound she jumped on a beautiful bed of geraniums, and furiously trampled them in the earth.

The nursery maid stood aghast; and even the little girl herself, the work of destruction complete, with a startled and sorrowful gaze contemplated the desolation which she had made.

"Very well, Miss Mowbray," so Dorothy at last broke the silence, "now that you have done what you please in the garden, perhaps you will please to walk with me to your mamma; for I must go, directly, you naughty little thing, and tell of you, or Mr. Dickson will be blaming *me*."

At Dickson's name all traces of repentance vanished from the child's face, and with a haughty step she joined the maid, and prepared to follow her to her mother.

"I'm sure I don't know what is to be done to you, Miss Mowbray; but if I was your mamma you should live upon bread and water for a week to come—that you should."

"I don't care for bread and water," said the little girl—"I don't care if I live on bread and water for *three* weeks." She stopped, then began again—"I am sorry I spoiled the flowers, because they are pretty flowers, and because mamma likes them; but I am very glad that I showed Dickson that I don't care a farthing what he says, and that I will spoil the flowers if I choose, and I hope you will tell him what I say."

"Well, I'm sure, Miss Mowbray, I don't know what is to be done to cure your tricks; something must be done, that is certain. It's quite awful to think what you will be when you grow up, if you go on in this way."

"I shall be better than you, Dorothy, at

any rate," said the little girl, proudly. "I heard you tell a story yesterday, when Sinclair scolded you. You know you broke the flower-pot, and you made her think it was Jane. I would not have been so mean as that for all the world."

The maid got very red, but only answered by pulling along the unresisting child. "Come along, you wicked, little, impertinent, mischievous thing."

The two stood at Mrs. Mowbray's dressing-room door. She was lying on the sofa, reading a novel. She was a weak and indolent, but well meaning woman.

"Come in, Dorothy. What do you want? What is the matter?"

"I have brought Miss Mowbray, ma'am; she has been behaving in *such* a way. Go along, Miss, and tell your mamma what you have been doing."

The little girl walked steadily to her mother's side, but remained silent.

"What is the matter, Ada? What complaint am I to hear about you now?"

“She’s been behaving, ma’am, like a little frenzy”—(fury, Dorothy probably meant)—“it was quite awful to see her. She has been trampling down your beautiful geranium beds like nothing—and all because I told her that Mr. Dickson did not choose to have her spoiling the flowers, and littering them about the garden.”

“Is this true, Ada?” said Mrs. Mowbray, looking gravely at the child.

Ada burst into a passion of tears. “It’s because Dickson is so unkind and so impertinent. He has no right to say that I shan’t touch the flowers; and I won’t do what he tells me.”

“Ada, is this really you? I should have thought it was one of Dickson’s own ignorant little children, and not Miss Mowbray, of Mowbray Castle.”

The appeal to her pride, however ill-judged, was instantaneous in its effects—her crying ceased, and, hanging her head, she stood, the picture of shame, by the side of her mother.

Mrs. Mowbray was about to take advantage of the subdued temper of her daughter, to instil some lessons, (whether profitable ones or not, would be a question,) when another door opened, and a gentleman, in a dressing-gown and slippers, looked into the room.

"Why, Miss Ada," he exclaimed, "what is going on here? I thought I heard you crying."

The little girl did not lift up her eyes, and he came a few steps further into the room.

"I hate to hear crying, Ada. What has it all been about?" He spoke as if the crying had disturbed or annoyed *him*, not as if he was displeased at the crying itself.

"Miss Mowbray has been in one of her tantarems, sir," said Dorothy, pertly. "If you just step to the window, you will see what a to-do she's been making, and all because she don't choose to take orders from Mr. Dickson. It's quite awful to think what she will be when she comes to be a woman."

Mr. Mowbray moved carelessly across the room, losing his slippers as he went, and looked out into the garden. Ada's performance excited, however, only his amusement; he burst into a fit of laughing.

"Well, Miss Ada, you have made a pretty piece of work, I must say. But you're quite right; don't take orders from Dickson, or anybody else, unless you please. I would pick as many flowers as I chose, if I were you—only, pray, don't cry any more."

"Really, Mr. Mowbray, what an education," interposed his wife.

"Don't talk to me about education," he said, slightly, as he picked up his slippers, and, in the same languid manner walked towards the door by which he had entered; "it's a word that always gives me an indigestion." He nodded to Ada, and closed the door.

"Take Miss Mowbray up stairs, Dorothy," said Mrs. Mowbray, with some vexation in her manner. "I will ring when I want her again."

Ada went up stairs with downcast eyes and a humbled manner; to have been likened to one of Dickson's children—to have behaved as only a poor and ignorant village child could have behaved, was still swelling her heart with shame, and her eyes with repressed tears.

Dorothy pushed her into the school-room.

"Ah! qu'avez vous, ma chère?" said the old Bonne who superintended Ada's education.

"J'ai été méchante, bien méchante—j'ai été aussi méchante que la fille du jardinier, maman dit qu'oui." And tears of pride and shame burst from her eyes.

"Ah! ma chère, ne pleurez pas," said the old woman, who doated on Ada, and who was repaid by Ada's ardent attachment; "on ne peut pas être toujours bonne—moimême je suis méchante quelquefois. Sechez vos pleurs, mon ange; nous serons bonne demain, n'est ce pas. Viens, ma petite, je te raconterai une charmante histoire." And putting her arms

round the little girl's neck, she smothered her with kisses.

Such was the training of a proud, wilful, passionate child—such the education of the young heiress, Ada Mowbray.

CHAPTER II.

“When I am a woman,” said little Matilda, “I will be so proud. It shall never be said that I care for anybody.”

ELLEN WAREHAM.

“WHY, mamma, are all novels about love?” Ada Mowbray sat on a low chair by the fire in her mother’s dressing-room—a book was on her knee, over which she had been poring with great apparent interest, when she suddenly looked up, and asked this question.

“Why should they not be about love?” said Mrs. Mowbray, who was not quite ready with an answer.

“Because, mamma, papa said the other day, that novels were intended to be pictures of real life.”

"Well! Ada."

"Well, mamma," said Ada, opening her large eyes wonderingly, "you don't mean to say, that in real life people think about nothing but love."

Ada's question was not, perhaps, a very difficult one to answer, but Mrs. Mowbray was puzzled by it; she never thought herself—not so much from deficiency of intellect as from indolence of mind, which made the act of thinking laborious. A pause, therefore, followed the remark, during which she endeavoured to collect some wandering ideas that were floating about her brain, relative to the subject under discussion.

"You must remember, Ada," she said, at last, as she caught hold of the flying apparition of a thought, "that novels do not profess to give the history of the whole of life; they fix upon a certain time, usually the time of youth. And there is a time in almost all—I might, I think, say in all people's lives, when love is the chief subject of their thoughts, their chief interest, their chief hope."

"Really, mamma! What, such love as I read of here," and she turned over the pages of the book that lay on her knee; "love that can break hearts, and make people talk of dying, as if it was a common thing?"

"Yes, Ada," said her mother, becoming excited with the subject, and speaking with unusual earnestness; "there have been many broken hearts for love—and there is no sacrifice, not even the sacrifice of life itself, which has not been made, and made willingly, by both men and women, for the sake of those they love. You do not understand it now; but, perhaps, some day you will know what the power of love may be."

The young girl made no answer; her eyes turned again upon her book, but it was evident that her thoughts were still dwelling upon this subject of love. After a few minutes, she broke the silence—

"Have I ever seen anybody in love, mamma?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Mowbray, laughing. "No, I don't exactly remember that you ever did."

"But I have seen married people, mamma; ought not that to be the same thing?"

Mrs. Mowbray sighed involuntarily, and was silent.

"Ought it not to be the same thing, mamma?" persisted her daughter.

"If it is," said Mrs. Mowbray, with some vexation, "then, I suppose, you have seen those who are in love very often."

"I don't think I have, though—and this is what makes me doubt about the truth of novels, mamma. Here," and again she looked through her book, "and not here only, but in all the novels that I read, they talk of eternal constancy, and of love being unchangeable; but it is not so. I see with my own eyes that love in real life is very different to the love described in books."

Ada had touched on a home question, and one that excited in Mrs. Mowbray's mind many unpleasing thoughts. She was silent for some time, then rousing herself, said—

"You don't seem to like novels, Ada?"

"Oh! yes, mamma, I like them; they

amuse me, and even interest me; but I think there is a great deal that is very silly in them: now listen to this—don't you call this foolish, mamma; nobody could speak in this way," and she read a few passages from an affecting, but perhaps rather mawkish love scene, described in the novel which she held in her hand.

" You are a very strange girl, Ada," remarked her mother; " I don't know how you come to be so unromantic. When I was your age, such a scene as that would have driven me wild with excitement, and I am not sure that I don't like it still."

" Oh! mamma, this is not the sort of thing to excite one. When I read of Bonaparte rising from a young officer to be that great emperor of France, or Macbeth, mamma—those are the things that excite me; the trials of love seem so poor compared to the hopes and fears of ambition."

" You are a very strange girl," again repeated Mrs. Mowbray; and as her eyes rested on the beautiful face of her daughter, she fell

into a train of musing and reflection which was unusual to her. The subject of her thoughts appeared after a short time.

"I cannot tell you, Ada, how much it surprises me to hear you speak. I never knew a girl of your age who thought as you seem to do; but I am almost glad that you are what you are. I am glad that you have no romance in your head. A disposition like yours will suit better with your father's plans for your future life."

"What are papa's plans for my future life?" asked Ada, looking up with an inquiring, but neither an anxious nor a startled gaze.

"No plan is definitively fixed upon, but what I mean is, that in your marriage your father will consider more the advantages of rank, riches, and greatness, than such feelings as love."

"I shall wish to do so myself, mamma," said the young girl, earnestly.

"What! ambitious already, Ada?" said her mother, smiling.

"I should wish to be great, mamma—I

should wish to be a queen, if I could. Should you not like to feel that you stood alone, that all the world was beneath you—that you depended only on yourself?"

"No, my dear Ada, not at all; I think I should be much happier if I was well taken care of; I have nothing of a queen about me. And you, my dear child, you must not indulge such foolish notions as these—no woman can stand alone, certainly no married woman; a wife must learn to obey her husband; remember, she vows it."

"I don't know about obey, mamma," said the young heiress; and her lip curled with pride, and her colour heightened as she spoke. "I should wish to be alone; I should like best to make my greatness for myself; but since it seems that in a woman's wretched fate this would be impossible, I suppose I must marry to be great—but if I marry I will not be a slave."

Mrs. Mowbray laughed, but Ada's opinions sounded strangely and coldly in her ears. She was a woman of very tender feelings, and

though their expression was checked by the indifference of her husband, and by a certain pride and reserve in her daughter, which forbade any great show of affection, yet in her love for these two objects her whole life was centered. She smiled as Ada spoke, but the words, and the feelings expressed in the words, chilled and pained her. “I hope I shall see you in love some day,” she said at last.

“What! in love, mamma, as people are in these foolish novels?—no, never.”

Such was Ada Mowbray at fifteen. In childhood it had been doubtful whether pride or passion would finally prevail in her character; they cannot both rule, for passion humbles pride; but as she advanced in years, it was evident that pride had gained the upper hand, and was controlling and bringing into subjection every bad as well as every good quality of her nature.

CHAPTER III.

Patrician beauty ! I bethink me well
Of the land's glory when I gaze on thee,
For lips and eyes like thine first wrought the spell
That made us what we are, the Brave, the Free,
And bade earth bow to England's chivalry.

W. READ.

'Tis safest in matrimony to begin with a little aversion.

THE RIVALS.

In the drawing-room at Mowbray Castle, a large party was assembled. Life was opening to the young heiress—that life upon which her aspiring nature panted to enter—that life which stands in so fair a vision before the eyes of the young; painted with features and colours varying as the characters of mankind, varying with the eyes of the painters themselves. Ada's vision of life bore not, perhaps,

much likeness to the dream that usually floats before a young girl's imagination.

She was now nearly eighteen, and for reasons best known to himself, Mr. Mowbray was anxious to secure her early marriage. The husband was selected and invited, and the present unusual hospitality at Mowbray Castle was exercised in furtherance of the object he had in view.

It was generally supposed that Mr. Mowbray was very rich, and though he made no great display of wealth, he did not contradict the opinion of the world, to the world in general. Privately he said he was very poor, but he showed no great symptoms of poverty. He seemed to have money at his disposal, for every purpose that pleased himself, and if he did not live in all points as his father and grandfather had lived before him, it appeared to be a matter of choice, not of necessity.

Mowbray Castle was well kept up, because he liked to see it in good order; and he had an excellent cook, because he was an epicure; but he did not open his house, or exercise

much hospitality, because society in the country bored him too much to think of such a thing. He kept no hunters, as his fathers had done before him, because he was too indolent to hunt; but he had fine carriage horses, because he liked to see fine horses in his carriage. He had no house in London, because he did not like to go to London *en famille*, but he had plenty of money to amuse himself in London when he went, for weeks or even for months to live there by himself. The only great sign of poverty which he exhibited was a temper unbearably irritable, whenever Mrs. Mowbray suggested that the house bills must be paid. He was always an indifferent husband, but on these occasions a thunder-cloud gathered, and burst over the head of his unfortunate wife; and, if forced to comply with her request, the compliance was always followed by a departure and long absence from Mowbray Castle.

He was fonder of his child than of his wife, but it was because she had never yet thwarted him—because she was beautiful, and because he hoped that she would in some way be of

use to him; he had no real affection for her, or, indeed, for anybody or anything except himself. He had married Mrs. Mowbray because she was a pretty young widow, with a large jointure, though rather beneath him in rank; but he had never cared about her, and though he now talked about his daughter's making a great marriage, it was not because he had any proud ambition that for her sake she should be great, any idea that by making her great he was consulting her happiness, but simply because he had fixed on a marriage which suited best with his plans for securing his own pleasure. He was, in short, thoroughly selfish—sleeping and waking, the only subject of his thoughts was how he could make himself most—not happy, his ideas were not exalted enough to use such a word,—but most comfortable,—how he could best remove from himself, body and mind, every thought, every thing, which could tend to disturb or annoy him.

Ada's marriage, as I before said, was the subject which at present chiefly occupied his

mind. The husband whom he had selected was the young Earl of Rochford, who had lately attained his majority, and whose alliance appeared to be a suitable one for the heiress of Mowbray Castle. The chief part of Mr. Mowbray's property was strictly entailed in the male line; but Mowbray Castle and an estate of £6000 a year, belonging to it, was in his own power. Lord Rochford's property was in the same county, and in one or two places the properties united—the suitableness of the alliance was therefore at first sight apparent.

Rumour said, that Lord Rochford had £40,000 a-year, and rumour was not so far wrong as it usually is. It was certain that he was immensely rich,—but, as is often the case with the very wealthy, he had, and had inherited from his father, a peculiarly lively desire to increase his worldly goods. The late Lord Rochford had looked with envious eyes upon the property of Mr. Mowbray—and with speculating eyes on the heiress of that property—and the present one, equally impressed with the advantage of joining the

two estates, was well disposed to pay his court to the young girl whose fame for beauty as well as riches was attracting the attention of many in and out of the county.

Lord Rochford was now a guest at Mowbray Castle—and he and Ada were to meet on this day for the first time. Mr. Mowbray had deemed it wiser and more expedient on many accounts that their acquaintance should be formed in the country—indeed, his hope was that the affair would be so quickly settled that there would be no necessity for Ada's appearance in London at all.

Mrs. Mowbray was agitated with all a mother's agitations on this eventful evening—and, hurrying over her own dressing, she hastened to the room of her daughter—hoping and expecting, accustomed though she was to what she called Ada's strange ways, to find her in such a pretty flutter of excitement as she remembered to have experienced on somewhat of a similar occasion herself. She was surprised, therefore, and disappointed to find Ada dressed and seated by the fire with a book in her hand.

"What! dressed already, Ada?" she said, with some annoyance in her manner.

"She calls herself dressed, ma'am," said the maid, who was still in the room, and was bustling about, opening drawers and shutting cupboards with the peculiar hasty movements which bespoke her displeasure. "I told Miss Mowbray that you would be very much displeased, and quite ashamed to have her go down such a figure."

"Let me look at you, my dear child," said Mrs. Mowbray, anxiously.

Ada laid down her book, and stood before her mother. She was dressed in white, with extreme, perhaps over simplicity—her head, her neck, even her arms, on which young ladies delight to lavish their ornaments, were perfectly unadorned. Mrs. Mowbray surveyed her with surprise and displeasure.

"Why is this, Ada?" she asked.

"What is the matter, mamma?—is there anything wrong?—my gown is quite new."

"New—yes, my dear child, I dare say it is new, but it is not suitable for to-night—re-

member that this is an unusual party—there is plenty of time, however, to change it, for the Herveyes arrived very late. Let us see, Mitchell, what she has got.”

Mrs. Mitchell threw open the doors of the wardrobe with great alacrity, and began to comment upon its contents. “This cerise crape is a beautiful dress, ma’am, if Miss Mowbray would wear it—but she does not like deep colours—it came in the box from London, last week—and this pink and white silk, ma’am, I understand, is very fashionable—or the blue—this is a very elegant dress, and the colour suits Miss Mowbray to a nicety—or”

Mrs. Mowbray interrupted a further enumeration of the beauties of the wardrobe. “This blue will do very nicely—I like Ada in blue,” and she began to lift the gown in question from the shelves of the press.

“Don’t trouble yourself, mamma,” said Ada, approaching her. “I don’t mean to change my gown—this will do very well.”

“Pray, don’t be wilful, Ada—you have no

idea, my dear child, how people dress in these days—as I came to your room I met Mrs. Vivian Hervey's maid in the passage, and she was carrying a gown—you never saw such a beautiful gown—pale pink silk, with three Brussels lace flounces—you really must make yourself a little more like other people."

"I shall not be jealous of Mrs. Vivian Hervey's gown, mamma. I choose to go down as I am."

"I wish you were a little less obstinate, Ada," said her mother, with a sigh; "will you not at least put something in your hair?—you have not touched those beautiful camelias which I desired Dickson to send you."

Ada took a white camelia from the glass which contained the flowers, fastened it in her gown, then again approached her mother. "Is it not time to go down, mamma?"

"Yes, I suppose we had better go, since my wishes have no effect upon you; but let me tell you, Ada, you trust too much to your beauty."

Ada made no answer, but led the way down stairs, and as the eye of her mother anxiously followed her, she was forced internally to confess, that the simplicity and purity of her dress served but to heighten the effect of the noble and intellectual cast of her beauty.

The choice of Ada's dress had not been guided by indifference to her personal appearance, nor yet by vanity. She was too proud to be vain (for there is nothing on which pride looks down so scornfully as on vanity); and though she might perhaps be conscious that her beauty depended not on the adventitious aids of dress and ornament, she would not so wilfully have opposed her mother's wishes, for though not a tender, she was not an undutiful daughter, had it not been that her pride stood in the way of her compliance with those wishes. She was fully aware of the purpose for which her father's guests were invited; fully aware that every eye would be directed to her in the light of the heiress of Mowbray Castle, and she scorned, therefore, to assume such a character—scorned to appear

to have adorned herself, to gratify the expectations, or appeal to the admiration of any one amongst them.

Meanwhile a great number of the party were assembled in the drawing-room. Let us glance over them as they stand, rather impatiently, awaiting the appearance of their host and hostess—a few only will need description.

There were Sir Thomas and Lady Fairfax and their daughter. They were great county people, and though but little acquainted with Mr. Mowbray, were distantly connected with him. They were tolerable in the country—very tedious in London. Sir Thomas was sensible, and Lady Fairfax thought herself so. She was talkative and good-natured—rather fond of fine names and fine company, from which propensity Sir Thomas also was not altogether free. Miss Fairfax was a good girl, but she had nothing striking about her except shyness, from which disease she suffered painfully.

Lord Rochford, Mr. Graham, and Mr.

Lovel, with a few other young men, had been invited by Mr. Mowbray, for different reasons, during a late visit to London.

Lord Rochford, who has been already mentioned as Ada Mowbray's selected husband, was not brilliant either in intellect or appearance. He was tall, not very ugly, but stiff and awkward. He was not silly, but heavy and stupid: in silliness there is often a kind of lightness which is amusing, and Lord Rochford was never amusing; while in stupidity, there is sometimes a dull kind of sense, and other good properties, which make it respectable, and these Lord Rochford possessed. He was devoted to hunting and shooting, and pursued those objects with a solemnity which belongs rather to a task than a pleasure. He was much attached to his family and his family place,—a good landlord and a good master,—but rather more fond of money than was necessary. This is all that need be said of Lord Rochford at present.

Mr. Graham was the eldest son of Lord ——, and was a young man of great expecta-

tions. He was amusing and well looking, and had been invited by Mr. Mowbray, that he might not seem too openly or exclusively to court Lord Rochford.

Mr. Lovel was a clerk in one of the public offices. As more than a few words will be required for his character, it is only necessary to say here, that he was a great favourite in London, and excited a greater degree of attention than many of those whose claims to attention, in their own opinion, stood higher than his. He was one of those instances which prove, that although too much influenced by mere wealth, the favour of the London world is not so entirely guided by it as is sometimes supposed. Mr. Mowbray had met him one day at dinner, and had been amused by his conversation, and he had invited him to Mowbray Castle in the hope of being amused again.

The remainder of the party need no particular mention.

“ This is an unexpected pleasure, Lord Rochford,” said Lady Fairfax, as she sat by

the fire in the drawing-room. “I had not the least idea that we should find you here. I did not know that you were acquainted with Mr. Mowbray.”

“Oh, yes! my father knew him very well, and I see him sometimes in London.”

“Did you come from London to-day?—it is a tedious journey. We hear so much about railroads now, I wish we had a chance of one coming our way; but that convenience will be for our children, I suppose, not for us.”

“Oh, no! I hear that we shall have railroads very soon on all the great roads. I had only a short drive to-day. I came from Beverley Park: it is only ten miles from here, you know. I drove Graham and Lovel over in my phaeton.”

“Ah, true! I had forgotten that you were so near. We are quite the other side of the county. I suppose you have often been here before, then?”

“No, never before—I have only seen Mr. Mowbray in London.”

“I hear so much of Miss Mowbray—she

promised to be very handsome when she was eleven or twelve years old; and I understand she is quite beautiful now."

"Beautiful, I understand," echoed Lord Rochford.

"I am afraid you have quite forgotten me, Miss Fairfax," said Mr. Lovel, approaching the shrinking, shivering girl, who sat by her mother's side.

"Oh, no! Mr. Lovel, I am sure Amelia has not forgotten you; but she is so foolishly nervous, I never can make her speak to any one. Where was it, Mr. Lovel, that we had the pleasure of meeting you last?—was it not at the Duchess of ——'s ball?"

"I think it was; and I think," he continued, with another good-natured attempt to make the shy girl speak, "that Miss Fairfax and I agreed very well about its being a very tedious one."

"Amelia is very foolish, Mr. Lovel; I believe the fact is, that she had rather be at home than at the best ball in London."

"I wonder if we are to have any dinner at

all to-night," remarked Mr. Graham, as he laid down a newspaper with which he had been solacing himself; "my patience is oozing out at the palms of my hands."

"I think there was a late arrival," said Lady Fairfax; "my maid told me that she heard a carriage drive up to the door after the dressing-bell had rung."

"I understand that Mr. Mowbray never appears in the drawing-room until dinner is announced," said Sir Thomas Fairfax.

"A wise plan, though not remarkable for civility. But here is some news," cried Mr. Graham, as a door at the end of a further drawing-room opened; "whom have we here?"

It needed no asking—Ada Mowbray's beauty was not a common gift. She followed her mother down the long drawing-room with the air of a queen. The consciousness that every eye was upon her with curiosity, criticism, or admiration, brought no tinge of colour to her cheek, no shade of timidity or embarrassment over her manner—her eye glanced fearlessly round;—bold she could not look, but calm,

quiet, self-possessed, she stood in the midst of the throng—bowed slightly, but gracefully, as name after name was mentioned to her; then withdrawing herself from her mother, sat down at a little distance alone.

Lord Rochford approached her. He was extremely struck by her beauty, and his floating idea of choosing her for his wife settled into determination. And it was no wonder that her beauty struck him, for it was of that perfection which speaks both to the outward and the inward eye. Her tall, but slight and graceful figure—the classical shape of her head and neck, seen to great advantage with her braided raven hair—the features perfect as if carved in marble—the complexion, but for its clearness and brightness, white and smooth as marble too—the dark grey eyes with the arched brows and shadowing eyelashes—these were beauties which a child must have seen and admired: and these were the beauties which attracted Lord Rochford's admiration. The expression of that clear, intellectual brow, the depth of her dark eyes, the shade of me-

lancholy which hung around and softened her mouth—all that gave interest to her beauty, was addressed to the inward eye, and perhaps escaped him.

If his intellect had been a degree brighter than it was, her cold and self-collected air might have embarrassed him. But he had that kind of stupidity which, being conscious of no deficiency, is always well satisfied with itself. He had determined to speak to Miss Mowbray when she came into the room, and his determination was not altered by her stately air.

He approached her, and the following dialogue passed between them:—

“I suppose, Miss Mowbray,” he began, in the slow, heavy voice in which he usually spoke, “that you did not venture out to-day?”

“Oh, yes, I was out walking.”

“Out walking—were you really? I thought if ladies left the fireside at all on such a day as this, that it was always in a close carriage. I never felt such a piercing wind.”

"I always go out," said Ada, haughtily.
"I particularly dislike staying at home." She was not fond of being classed as a species with "ladies" in general.

"Are you a great horsewoman, Miss Mowbray?"

"No, I never ride."

"There must be capital riding on the Downs, between this and Beverley Park. I wonder that it does not tempt you."

"I dislike riding. I had always rather walk."

"I am surprised at that—it is such a favourite exercise with young ladies in general, and must be such an amusement in the country. My sisters ride a great deal."

A pause.

"Did you ever ride in the Park, Miss Mowbray?"

"No; we have been very little in London."

"I don't much like to see a lady riding there, it makes me nervous; but in the country it is very different. My sisters say

that they could not live in the country if it was not for their riding parties. Perhaps you like the country, Miss Mowbray?"

"I like the country, but I think I should like London too."

Before Lord Rochford could enter upon a discussion of the relative merits of London life and country life, a favourite topic, the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. and Mrs. Vivian Hervey, the guests whose late arrival had caused the long delay in the appearance of dinner. Mr. Vivian Hervey was a neighbour, though not a very near neighbour. He had lately married, and had lately been abroad, of both of which feats he was very proud. He was also proud of the wife he had chosen—proud of all his domestic concerns, and proudest of all of his own witty sayings. Mrs. Vivian Hervey was pretty, young, good-tempered, and very silly. She was devoted to her husband, and almost as much devoted to dress. On her entrance into the drawing-room, she flew to Mrs. Mow-

bray, and with her silvery voice and childish manner, addressed her:—

“ Oh! my dear Mrs. Mowbray, I really am quite ashamed—I know we have kept you waiting, because I heard a great bell ring just as we drove up to the house-door; but it was all the fault of the roads—nothing but stones all the way—we took a whole hour and a half to drive here.”

Mrs. Mowbray civilly begged her not to think of it.

“ Oh, you are very kind to say so, but I know everybody hates waiting. Vivian says they do. Oh, I must just go and speak to Miss Mowbray.” She flew away to Ada, then back again to Mrs. Mowbray, and sat down on a low chair beside her. “ I must tell you, Mrs. Mowbray, about all my misfortunes. I thought I never should have been dressed tonight—first, the key of the imperial was lost, and that put me in such a fuss, I thought I should have to go to bed, or else to come down in my cloth gown that I put on for the

journey, as Vivian calls it—well, then, at last, after fifty hours, that was found, and I was beginning to dress, and Vivian looked in, and he said the gown I had pulled out would make me look quite like a monster.”

“ No, my dear Harriet, I only remarked that the gown would not do you justice, considering. . . .”

“ Now, Vivian, you are going to be impertinent again; but I will tell Mrs. Mowbray my own story. He said I had got a red face and a red nose, and that I had better put on a pink gown, if I did not want to look like a monster; so my maid had to go and get another gown ready. Vivian is so very particular. I believe he quite hates me when I have got a red nose, and how can one help it on a day like this?”

“ I must contradict you again, Harriet,” said the husband. “ I hope I know my duty better than to hate you for any personal misfortune.”

“ Oh! but he does, Mrs. Mowbray; you have no idea how he scolds me about it some-

times—as if it was my fault; and sometimes when I am quite dying of thirst, he will not let me have any tea, because he thinks tea makes one's face red. Now, is not this true, Vivian?"

"I am afraid, my dear Harriet, that you are giving a very unfavourable opinion of our domestic happiness."

This conjugal quarrel, which had been carried on for the benefit of the room, was interrupted by the announcement of the long delayed and much desired dinner. Mr. Mowbray strolled into the room, shook hands with the principal guests, and took no notice of the others—said a cross word, *en passant*, to his wife, then internally shuddering, took Lady Fairfax to dinner. His temper, perhaps, naturally enough, had not been sweetened by the delay.

"Three quarters of an hour and five minutes have we sat in the drawing-room," whispered Mr. Graham to Mr. Lovel. "My jaws have become so stiff with swallowing yawns, that I shall swallow nothing else to-

night. To-morrow I follow Mr. Mowbray's good example."

" You seem to be very cold, Miss Fairfax; will you not come nearer the fire?" said Ada, approaching the poor trembling girl, who, when the ladies returned to the drawing-room, seated herself, as shy people are very apt to do, at a distance from the fire, from her mother, and from everybody.

" Oh! no, thank you, I am not at all cold;" but she shivered as she spoke.

" What is it then that makes you tremble so much?" asked Ada, with some curiosity.

" It frightens me so much to dine out, or to go anywhere away from home. I know it is very silly, but I never can help it."

Ada looked at her in wonder; but she was not ill-natured, and she sat down by the trembling girl.

" Do you mean to say that you are frightened to-night, and that it is fright that makes you tremble in this way?"

" Oh, yes; and it is always the same.

Mamma says I could help it if I liked; but I really can't. I am sure I wish that I did not feel as miserable as I always do when I am away from home."

"And what alarms you?" asked Ada. She was puzzled. Shyness was a sensation of which she had neither consciousness nor idea.

"Everybody alarms me, and everything. I feel wretched when I am left quite alone, and yet I am still more afraid of being spoken to. I see you don't understand me—how should you? I dare say you feel able to talk to anybody?"

"I hope I do," said Ada, haughtily. "Anybody, at least, to whom I should think it worth while to speak. But you are too humble, Miss Fairfax; why should you be afraid? Why do you think about people's speaking, or not speaking?—what does it matter?"

"I don't know, perhaps it doesn't matter. I wish I could feel that it did not. But if I am left alone I feel so desolate and forsaken, and if I am spoken to, then I feel so silly,

that I wish I was alone again. I seem to have nothing to say."

"But why, Miss Fairfax, do you think about other people at all? Why don't you feel that you are quite as good as all the rest of the world?"

"Oh, I could not feel that."

"Why not? I always feel it. I don't mind what other people think or say of me; at least I never yet saw the person whose opinion I respected enough to stand in awe of it."

"Ah, but that is very different, Miss Mowbray. You may well feel above everybody, because you are above everybody."

The compliment was so evidently spoken from the heart, that Ada was touched by it, and felt a greater degree of kindness towards the young girl than she usually did towards her fellow-creatures. She did not notice the remark, however, but continued—

"I see no one here to-night who ought to command any great feeling of respect. There is only one who seems to soar above the very commonest specimens of human creatures. Do

you know everybody? I have forgotten some of the names."

"Yes, almost everybody, I think. They did not belong to mamma's set in London, so I only know them a little; but we met them occasionally, and mamma makes acquaintance, it seems to me, with the whole world."

"There was one person whose appearance I rather liked. He sat next to Mrs. Hervey at dinner. Do you know who he is?"

"Oh, yes; that is Mr. Lovel. I know him a little. Don't you think him very handsome—or, as people say, interesting looking?"

"I thought he looked clever. Who or what is he?"

"I don't know—I never thought. He is very clever, and very fashionable, but not at all fine, as some people of that sort are. I don't know anybody who is so good-natured, or who alarms me so little. He —" The young lady appeared to be growing excited in her encomiums, but Ada interrupted her.

"I meant, what is he? Is he rich, or to what profession does he belong?"

"Oh, I believe he is a clerk in one of the public offices—the Foreign Office, I think; and I think he was a private secretary for a short time."

"I thought he looked something better than a clerk," Ada said, carelessly.

"And what do you think of Lord Rochford?" inquired Miss Fairfax, who, when at her ease, was as well inclined to gossip as most young girls appear to be. But she found no response to such a tendency in Ada. Without noticing her question, she invited her to follow her to another table, covered with books and prints, in a more habitable part of the room; and, happy to have some occupation which took her from herself, Miss Fairfax accepted her offer, and was comfortably placed for the remainder of the evening.

CHAPTER IV.

The abstract conception of *Power* has a fascination in it which to some minds is quite irresistible.

LOYOLA AND JESUITISM.

Pauline, by pride
Angels have fallen ere thy time—by pride,
That sole alloy of thy most lovely mould.

LADY OF LYONS.

A GROUP of young men stood the following day around the fire in the billiard-room of the Castle. They were partly engaged in watching and criticising the play of Mr. Vivian Hervey, (who was a tolerably good player, and supposed himself to be a first-rate one) and partly in discussing the merits of the Castle and its inhabitants.

“And Miss Mowbray!” said one of the

young men; "you say nothing of Miss Mowbray!"

"Miss Mowbray is very handsome," pronounced Lord Rochford.

"Yes, very handsome," remarked the same young man, "and she knows it too. No compliment, I fancy, would take her by surprise."

"I should be sorry to attempt a compliment," said Mr. Graham. "If my pretty speech did not please, I think I should hardly receive a retort courteous."

"Do you think Miss Mowbray looks ill-tempered?" inquired Lord Rochford.

"I fancy she could show her displeasure if she was thwarted. She appears to be a very wilful young lady. I heard Mr. Mowbray, like a fool as he is, reprove her last night for the simplicity of her dress, and I never saw a greater degree of determination to have her own way than Miss Mowbray showed. Mr. Mowbray at last desisted, with a laugh, and I suppose that was a specimen of the usual fashion of the house."

"I don't think she looks ill-tempered," mused Lord Rochford.

"I should try her with some fiery trial before I had anything to do with her," said Mr. Graham, laughing. "It seems to me that that quiet face of hers might be compared to the snowy heights of Hecla; and I am a little bit of a physiognomist. What do you say, Lovel? you stand there and say nothing."

"If you were young ladies, I should say you were jealous of Miss Mowbray's beauty," was Lovel's reply.

"Lovel thinks himself a thorough Christian for that most unchristian remark. I knew he was saying cutting things, as he stood there so demurely."

"You asked my opinion," said Lovel, smiling.

"Well, what *is* your opinion of Miss Mowbray?"

"I think you are rather severe judges after one night's acquaintance."

"Nonsense about one night!—one hour is all I ever ask before I give in my definitive

opinion of any man, woman, or child, you may please to name."

"And your definitive opinion would generally be a false one, certainly would be a false one in Miss Mowbray's case."

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Lovel! I had no idea that I was touching upon any tender point. Miss Mowbray may be an angel for what I know to the contrary; and if looking down on us poor mortals can make her one, I will be the first to allow her claim to the name."

"I don't always dislike pride in a woman," remarked Lord Rochford.

"Don't you?—well, I do. I dislike it in women generally, and I particularly dislike it when applied to myself. I like my merits to be appreciated;—a person who can appreciate them rises high in my estimation. Those who do not appreciate them; those who look at me *de haut en bas* as Miss Mowbray does, are very welcome to their opinion,—I am sure I don't care for their indifference, but they certainly

must expect me to have a poor opinion of them and their taste in return: Don't you agree with me, Rochford?"

"Indeed, I think what you say seems very sensible."

"Lovel doesn't agree. What do you think he said the other day?—that the more a person hated him the better he should like them."

"That is being very chivalrous, Mr. Lovel," said Mr. Hervey, as he passed with his cue in his hand.

"It seems to me to be a very foolish idea," observed Lord Rochford.

"Of course, I never made such a speech in my life," Lovel said, laughing.

"Yes, you did—now don't fight off. With my usual talent I have only expressed concisely the substance of a whole oration. That is always the way—people say a foolish thing and forget it, and think it is forgotten by others, but I never forget. I remember all the foolish things you all have said since my first acquaintance with you."

"You must have a wonderful memory," remarked Lord Rochford; and he must indeed, so far as Lord Rochford was concerned.

"What I said," Lovel said, "was very wise, and I am not the least ashamed of it. If you wish to renew the argument, I repeat it now. I said that it was a very poor love which was founded only on such things as sympathy and mutual attachment. If a character is worth love and admiration, I think it is worthy of them without regard to selfish considerations, and therefore I think that a hopeless love is just as likely to exist as a fortunate one."

"Ah, well, it comes to the same thing. What do you think of Lovel's opinion, Rochford?"

"I am sure I should never think of liking a person who hated me."

"Nor more should I—nor more would Lovel, if it came to the point; and yet I don't know, if any one could be such a fool, I think it would be Lovel. It would give that interest to life which he complains of never

finding. Yes, I don't despair of seeing Lovel well hated, and dying in consequence."

"No, I shan't die," Lovel said; "not of that, at least—don't flatter yourself."

"We must hope for the best," replied Mr. Graham; and the subject dropped.

A day or two passed, and Ada made acquaintance with all her father's guests, except one; was sought, courted, flattered by all except one; and, with the perverseness and fancifulness of human nature, it was for the society of that one only that she felt the smallest inclination. He stood aloof, partly from circumstances which had not exactly thrown them together, but more because, in the strange interest with which from the first moment he had seen her, he preferred rather to observe than to approach her. That one was Lovel.

The attraction between strongly-contrasted characters has often been remarked; but there is, I think, a deeper reason for it than is at

first sight apparent. It is by man, by intercourse with man, that man's faults are chiefly to be corrected; and as to every poison there is an antidote, so it appears that human characters are set one against another with some such object in view. It is very rarely that strongly-marked characters do not, at some time in their lives, meet with their antidote or cure. Thus the slothful are animated by the enthusiastic and aspiring—the proud are touched by humility—the wily are startled by the sight of truth and innocence—the worldly-minded by the approach to holiness. That the lesson is not always learnt is no argument against such a provision for man's improvement, for it is not in this case only that opportunities are neglected.

This may seem a fanciful explanation of an attraction between two people, which admits of a simpler solution; but even granting that such an attraction was the beginning of love, I do not think that the idea is altogether to be rejected, that love itself, the most powerful moral agent, both for good and for ill, (I speak

of this particular passion of love, and of that love which forms the tie of friendship, not of those ties which come under the head of natural affection), may have been sent into the world for some such purpose as this.

I should, however, be misunderstood if it was supposed that this attraction was felt more than very slightly on Ada's side. She had overheard Lovel's conversation more than once, and had been amused by it—and more than amused; there was in it, much as she often disagreed with his opinions, a higher tone than any to which she had been accustomed, and she was struck by it; and in a slight degree, perhaps, she was piqued that one to whom she deigned to attend, should not have been the first to approach her. But this was all—not on present amusement, or present interest, her hopes were set. Her dreams were all in the future.

She was perfectly conscious, although no regular communication had been made on the subject, of her father's wishes with regard to Lord Rochford. She saw, too, at once, with

her clear sight, that her fate was in her own hands; and on the prospect opening before her she gazed with a calm, cold gaze of inquiry—and did not shrink. Pride, it has been said, is the defect nearest to insanity; and it is so, for it is a strong delusion. Ada's nature was a lofty one. Could she have seen clearly, she must have revolted from the path on which she was entering; but pride, ambition, the prospect of power, blinded her eyes, and made her welcome the destiny that was presented to her. She wished to be great—her heart panted to stand above her fellows—proud, independent, and free; and all that could make her great—things which in themselves she would have scorned—rank, riches, pomp, the world's applause, were invested with a halo of glory from the passion within. As she had said in youth, she would have preferred to stand alone, but since only through marriage could she attain all she desired to possess, she was prepared to sacrifice herself to her ambition. Love was a thing of which she made no account; it was rather her pride to con-

template her immunity from such human feelings. She saw Lord Rochford—with her penetrating gaze searched every corner of his mind and heart, and was satisfied. In her blind arguing, his inferiority to herself was no disadvantage. She could but stand more free and uncontrolled.

The courtship, therefore, such as it was, was begun, but it was conducted with profound secrecy and discretion. Lord Rochford's mind was in fact made up, but he did not allow that it was so, even to himself. He preferred to think that he was considering the point. He was fond (as are many unblest with intellect) of a mystery, and often amused himself with fancying the surprise and, he hoped, the consternation which would be excited when he announced that he had won the prize. His courtship, therefore, was addressed rather to Mr. Mowbray than to his daughter; and though, perhaps, it might not usually have been successful, was one well adapted to the circumstances of the case. From Ada's manner nothing could be gathered.

She was quietly civil to him as to all her father's guests, but made not one single step to welcome him. Others might have doubted, more perhaps than doubted, his certainty of success, but it never entered into Lord Rochford's mind to suppose that a young lady could be unwilling to be his wife—so soon as Mr. Mowbray was gained, there was no more doubt, except as to his own decision.

One evening Lady Fairfax was entertaining Mrs. Mowbray with her ideas on education. "My girls learn everything," she said; "they have a most accomplished governess. She was recommended by Lady Isabella Finch; and in London they have the best masters of all sorts; my maxim is, 'pick up all you can when you are young, for when you grow up you learn nothing,' as I have found by experience to be the case. Amelia plays and sings and draws; understands German, French, and Italian, and has some idea of astronomy and geology. Georgina, my second girl, in addition to this, has learnt Spanish and botany,

and a very pretty way of modelling; and my third, Arabella, who is more energetic than her sisters, has begged to be allowed to learn Greek and Latin, and Euclid, with her brother's tutor. Sir Thomas objects to this, but after all, it is only a further following out of my maxim."

"But do they learn anything well?" suggested poor Mrs. Mowbray, who was perfectly aghast at this list of accomplishments.

"You shall see Amelia's drawings tomorrow; they are very tolerable, though she has not so decided a genius as her sisters—she wants energy; you shall judge of her playing now. Amelia, my love," calling to her daughter, who sat at a little distance with Mr. Vivian Hervey, "go and play; Mrs. Mowbray wishes to hear you play."

"Oh! mamma," said Miss Fairfax, imploringly.

"Nonsense, Amelia, I cannot have you behave so foolishly; you do never get over your shyness if you will not make some effort to conquer it; go and play directly—I brought

your portfolio of music down this morning—go, I desire it."

Mr. Hervey opened the pianoforte, and the poor girl went tremblingly across the room, not to the pianoforte, but to a sofa where Ada and Mrs. Hervey were sitting.

Mrs. Hervey was remonstrating with Ada on the simplicity of her dress, asking unnumbered questions about jewels and artificial flowers, recommending milliners in London, at Paris, and at Brussels, who had things "actually to die for," and at the moment Miss Fairfax approached, was describing the beauties of a new shot silk, which was "heavenly."

Miss Fairfax interrupted the conversation. "Oh! my dear Mrs. Hervey," she said, very earnestly, "I wish you would be so kind as to play with me; I should not mind playing a duet, but I am so frightened, I am sure that I could not strike a note if I tried to play alone."

"I am very sorry, but I can't—I never could play at sight; but why should you be frightened, Miss Fairfax? I am sure you will

play very well," and she turned to resume her conversation with Miss Mowbray.

"Can I be of any use, Miss Fairfax?" said Ada, getting up; and, without waiting for an answer, she went across the room to the pianoforte.

"I did not think Miss Mowbray would have been so goodnatured," said Mr. Graham to Lovel.

An old man, a country neighbour, who was dining at the Castle, heard the remark and commented upon it. "Miss Mowbray will never fail in an act of real kindness; she may have many faults, but she has a thoroughly good heart."

Lovel made no observation, but his eyes followed Ada, and shortly afterwards he joined the party round the pianoforte.

Miss Fairfax played "fluently"—nothing more, as many young ladies well taught, but without talent, play. After a few duets with Ada, and, with much trembling, a set of waltzes by herself, she got up, and Miss Mowbray was entreated to play alone.

She consented at once, and as she played, her countenance lighted and kindled, and the proud calmness of her brow vanished. She played well, with much execution—but the execution was nothing—hanging as a simple accompaniment about her own deep feeling. She had chosen a Nocturne of great beauty, but of a beauty depending entirely on the will and power of the player. Miss Fairfax would probably have played her hearers to sleep—from Ada's hands the chords rang out so soft and clear, and full, that all who stood around hung on the notes with a feeling of regret that they should hear them no more.

And Lovel, as he gazed upon her, marvelled that he should have doubted, as he had doubted, whether under that pure intellectual brow a heart was concealed.

She ceased, and when she ceased, the light faded from her eyes, and the colour from her cheeks, and with careless coldness she listened to the praises poured upon her ears.

“Oh! Miss Mowbray, how you do play,” said Miss Fairfax, with much sincerity; “Mr.

Lovel, does not Miss Mowbray play *too* beautifully?"

"Does Miss Mowbray like compliments?" he asked, with a smile, and his eyes met Ada's for a moment.

"To be sure she does," said Mrs. Hervey; "how can you ask such a question, Mr. Lovel? everybody likes compliments."

"Do they?" he said.

"I can answer for one who does," cried Mr. Hervey, bowing to his wife.

"I know I do, and I am not ashamed of it. I know that we all like compliments if we were but honest enough to confess it. Now I am going to ask all round, and I won't have any stories told. Miss Fairfax, I begin with you—don't you like compliments?"

"I think I should very much," she said, honestly, "but I have never had one."

"Oh! good gracious, Miss Fairfax, you don't mean that. Now, what an opportunity for you all. Vivian, Mr. Lovel, can nobody pay Miss Fairfax a compliment?"

"I think Miss Fairfax must be so accus-

tomed to compliments," said Mr. Hervey, with a smile and a bow, "that she has lost the power of distinguishing them."

"There, Miss Fairfax. Now, is not Vivian the cleverest person that ever was? Well, now, Miss Mowbray, I am coming to you, and you must confess the truth. Don't you like a compliment very much?"

"What do you mean by a compliment?" said Ada.

"A compliment! Oh! you must know what a compliment is. It is so difficult to explain; but it means something very pretty, and——"

"I was not sure if you meant the truth."

"Oh! one need not be so very strict as that. It may be a little more than the truth. A compliment sees one *en couleur de rose*, you know."

"Then I don't like compliments," said Ada.

"Miss Mowbray does not need your *couleur de rose*, Harriet. A compliment to her cannot surpass the truth."

"There, Miss Mowbray, you hear what Vivian says. Supposing, then, that the compliment is strictly the truth, should you like it then?"

"Then it must depend entirely upon the person from whom the compliment comes," said Ada, haughtily; and she left the pianoforte.

"From whom, I wonder, would Miss Mowbray like to receive a compliment? I like compliments from anybody; but best of all from Vivian."

"I think Mr. Hervey was right about Miss Mowbray. Don't you, Mr. Lovel?" said Miss Fairfax, timidly.

He smiled, without answering her. Then leaving the pianoforte, he sat down at a table, and began to turn over some prints; but his eye followed Ada; and he confessed to himself that he had never watched a human being with so deep an interest before.

A quarter of an hour afterwards he had crossed the room, and was standing at her side.

CHAPTER V.

Our own life seemed then
But as an arrow flying in the dark,
Without an aim—a most unwelcome gift,
Which we might not put by.

R. C. TRENCH.

In earlier days and calmer hours,
When heart with heart delights to blend,
Where bloom my native valley's flowers,
I had, oh ! have I still, a friend ?

THE GIAOUR.

To understand and appreciate the character of Reginald Lovel, a few words will be necessary. His name was Reginald, but he had no relations in London, or early friends, to call him by such a familiar appellation. To the world he was Lovel, and nothing more.

Though more thoughtful than is usual with

young men of his age, for he was but three-and-twenty, his character was by no means an uncommon one; and the complaint which he constantly made of a want of interest in life—the ennui under which he perpetually suffered, is a complaint and a suffering which, unfortunately, is well known to many. There was much in him to interest, and much to admire; but there was, or appeared to be, a deficiency in his character. I say was, or appeared to be, because it was doubtful whether this deficiency, an absence of energy and industry, sprang from within, or, as he himself supposed, was caused by the outward circumstances of his position. A wise writer of the present day has said, that no man who truly loves his fellow-creatures can find his life a weary one. If this be true, and if, in all cases where a man really desires to be of use in the world, he can find the means of being so, then Lovel's judgment was a wrong one; and they were right who warned him against himself and his own indolence, as his greatest enemy.

He began life early. His father was the

second son of Lord Lovel, the head of an old patriarchal Scotch family, whose members had never, for several centuries, crossed the border. Feuds carried down from generation to generation are not now very common; but the Lovels, whose prejudices were, on all points, equal to that particular prejudice which tied them to their native land, boasted of an hereditary enemy; and the youthful members of the family, although not uninstructed in the Christian creed, were certainly, from childhood upwards, deeply imbued with the principle to love their friend and hate their enemy. Notwithstanding, however, the excellence of their education, it chanced that Herbert Lovel, a second son, and a great favourite—whose feelings and prejudices were, perhaps, less strictly regulated than those of his fathers and forefathers—wilfully chose to fall in love with the beautiful daughter of his enemy, and, in spite of every remonstrance, injunction, and threatening, to marry her. The marriage was in many points an advantageous one; the young lady was high-born, and tolerably well dowered

—possessed of some merit, and much beauty; but what were such considerations as these? Herbert Lovel was cast off, and to his dying day unforgiven.

The young man retired with his bride to a Highland home. Although on one point his feelings had broken loose from the restraint of family prejudice, on all other points he was a true Lovel; and no remonstrances of his wife could induce him to leave his native land, or endeavour to push his fortune in other climes. He passed his life, therefore, in obscurity, but in comfort, peace, and happiness. To his will his wife at length submitted, so far as they themselves alone were concerned; but when her eyes rested on the radiant beauty and dawning intellect of her only son, she determined that he should not waste his sweetness on the desert air. Having had his own way in more respects than one, it was but fair that the husband should, in this instance, yield to the entreaties of his wife. There was much reluctance to overcome. He did not conceal that he hated England and the English, and that he was convinced the child

would be ruined amongst them; but he gave way at last; and with a heart almost broken at parting from her darling—but with proud visions of a future glory to the name of Lovel—the mother sent her boy to Eton, to take his place amongst the young and the high-born, the intellectual and aspiring of his generation.

It was a dangerous ordeal. To be thrown, at nine years old, entirely upon himself, in the midst of strange faces, strange customs, and strange temptations, must be to every boy trying, and is to some utter ruin.

But the lonely and hardy habits which young Lovel had contracted in his native mountains, joined to a certain refinement and independence of natural disposition, made him fully equal, both in body and mind, to the difficulties of his position. When his companions saw that though quick and steady at his tasks, he was merry at play—that he could bear pain without tears, and a joke without anger—that he was good-tempered under common provocation, but would knock a boy

down for impertinence, they began to respect, as well as to like him, and the manly little boy was a general favourite both with masters and scholars.

It happened that a boy belonging to the same house with himself, formed for young Lovel one of those romantic attachments which are sometimes formed by children at an early age, and this friendship influenced in many ways the formation of his character, and his future life. The boy was the son of a prominent political character, and in one or two of the short holidays when Lovel accompanied him to his home, the parents of his friend were struck with the engaging manners and peculiar talents of the young stranger, and would sometimes laughingly assure him that he was destined to be great.

"I should like to be great, shouldn't you, Lovel?" said little George Howard, when he one day overheard from his father a remark of this nature.

"I think I should like to *do* something great," replied his companion.

He had already, at ten years old, made a difference in his mind between the two things.

It is possible, nay probable, that this friendship might have been without effect upon his fate in life (for political characters have too many claims upon their influence and their interest to be able to attend, however much they may desire it, to all the promising talents that come under their notice) had it not been for some circumstances which peculiarly endeared young Lovel to the parents of his friend.

The boys were out one day on a boating excursion, when, from the accidental carelessness of one of their companions, George Howard fell into the water. Without a moment's thought, Lovel jumped in after him. The place was deep and dangerous, but, after some struggling, and some peril to the lives of both, Lovel dragged his friend to the side of the boat, and he was saved; saved from a watery grave, but not from death. From the day of the accident, whether through the

effects of cold, or from some unknown injury which he then received, the boy faded. For a time, before his symptoms became alarming, he remained at school, and Lovel was his constant attendant, watching him by night, and amusing him by day; and when at length fears began to be entertained for his life, and he was removed to his home, the grief of the boys at their separation was so great, and the ill effects on the health of the invalid so apparent, that Lovel, with pressing entreaties, was requested to come to him, and he remained with his friend until his death.

To watch day by day, and week after week, the declining of one who, but a short time before, had been in health as vigorous as his own, was calculated to impress the most thoughtless, and Lovel's mind was not a thoughtless, but what is called an impressionable one. The remembrance of those hours left strong traces upon his memory, and some fragments of their last conversation for ever after haunted his mind and his imagination.

One evening the parents of the boy were at

dinner; the nurse was resting; Lovel sat alone by his bedside.

“Are you there, Lovel?” said George Howard, suddenly breaking a long silence.

“Yes. I thought you were asleep.”

“I have not been asleep. I was only dreaming. I was thinking, Lovel, of our future lives,” and he fixed his eye, now wild and unnaturally bright, on his young attendant’s face.

Lovel looked at him painfully. Boy as he was, and perhaps as little inclined to serious thought as schoolboys usually are, he could not read the signs of approaching death in that, as it seemed, unconscious face, without a feeling of fear.

“What in our future lives were you thinking of, George?” he asked, hesitatingly.

The boy looked at him again. “I was thinking of *your* life up into the world, and *mine* down into the grave.”

Lovel made no answer, except by a glance of deep sadness. He had been pained at his unconsciousness, and now he felt a deeper pain in his knowledge.

"I was thinking of my old dreams, Lovel," he continued, after a moment; "all my dreams of greatness. Do you remember how we used to talk, and how ambitious I used to be? I was to be greater than any one ever yet had been—greater than Pitt—greater than the Duke of Wellington. Do you remember?" and he smiled—one of those bright strange smiles which, like gleams of sunshine on a grave, so often play upon the face of death.

"And how do you think of your dreams now, George?" asked young Lovel, bending over him with curiosity and melancholy interest.

"All so strangely," replied the boy. "You can't think how differently everything appears to me since I have been ill. My dreams used to be only dreams, I know, but they were *real* dreams, and now I wish I could tell you what I feel, it is so odd—almost as if this world was nothing—almost to wonder how I ever was as I used to be;—and instead of dreams of the old kind, I wish I could tell

you, I have such strange dreams—such strange thoughts. I hear such strange sounds——” He languidly closed his eyes, and lay for some time still and silent, while his young companion, full of life and health, sat by his side, pondering upon his words.

“ Do you ever read the Bible, Lovel?” said George Howard, at length breaking the silence again.

“ Sometimes—not very often, I am afraid,” replied Lovel, colouring.

“ Should you mind reading it to me? I asked mamma to read it to me this morning, and she cried so much, I don’t like to say anything about it again; as if reading the Bible would make me die the sooner!” and he smiled again.

Lovel took a Bible in his hand. “ What shall I read, George?” he asked, as he turned over the pages.

“ There is a verse running in my head,—I wonder if you could find the place. I can’t remember quite, but I think it must be in the Psalms,—‘ Man walketh in a vain shadow,

and disquieteth himself in vain.' It is always running in my head; it comes into my mind as I lie here awake at night; I don't know why, but it haunts me. I wish you could find the place. 'Man walketh in a vain shadow,' " he repeated, in an earnest, thoughtful, musing tone.

That night the boy died. He had been nearer death than any had supposed, and his words remained deeply engraven on his young companion's mind.

It is not often that a boy feels very deeply.

"The tear down childhood's cheek that flows
Is like the dewdrop on the rose :
When next the summer wind comes by
And waves the bush the flower is dry."

And though, at the age of fourteen, much of childhood is past, the feelings, the light elastic feelings of childhood remain. When a boy does feel deeply, the suffering usually exercises a great influence over his future life,—an influence sometimes for good, sometimes for evil, according to the heart that receives,

or the after circumstances by which the feeling is either seared or cherished.

None knew how deeply Lovel suffered after the death of his friend, for he said but little; but for months, even years, the remembrance—not a calm, but a painful remembrance—brooded within him: and this the more, because, either from some peculiar charm in the character of his first friend, or from that halo which hovers over the friendships of our early years, he never found another who could replace him in his affection. The influence which this remembrance exercised over him was both for good and for evil: it had in some ways a purifying effect upon his character, for such must always be the case when the thoughts of the young are directed without terror to the unseen world; but it had its danger too; it spoke somewhat too forcibly to the dreamy and melancholy character of his nature, to something within him too romantic and refining for the cares and struggles of life.

At sixteen, the father of his friend procured for him a clerkship in one of the public

offices ; and on announcing to him the appointment, he spoke to him kindly and seriously on the necessity of exertion, on the necessity of depending on himself for his future rise and success in life, and the advice then given Lovel did not neglect to follow. He was not one to indulge in idleness or dreaminess when a sufficient object prompted to exertion ; and the remembrance that his father and mother were watching him, were living only in his life, and in the hope of his advancement, was enough to make him set vigorously to work, and prompt him to continual steadiness and industry.

But at twenty, his father and mother died, within a few weeks of each other ; his home was broken up ; he stood alone. And the object which had hitherto animated him being removed, he suffered weariness and gloom to steal over his mind.

He had within him a great deal of latent energy, and even ambition, but there was nothing which sufficiently interested him to call it forth. Beyond the spur of poverty, for

he had that dangerous thing, as it has been called, a competence, enough, and more than enough, for all he could desire; he seemed to be toiling for a shadow—for that which would bring neither pleasure to himself, nor benefit to the world. Often and often he meditated a retreat from the life he led, to the calm and quiet beauty of his Highland home—but the recollection of his mother's hopes withheld him. Her memory, without her love to reward, or her smile to animate, was not sufficient to give zest to his daily employments, but it forbade him to cross the wishes which she had expressed, or by his own act to destroy the visions in which she had indulged.

In early life he had not lived much in general society—he had not fancied it; but now, in hope of finding some excitement, some interest to fill up the void and weariness of his thoughts, he plunged into dissipation. His manners were so manly, yet so unassuming—his appearance so pleasing and “interesting,” as Miss Fairfax said—there was about him so peculiar a mixture of liveliness

and melancholy, that his success was great, and the greater, perhaps, because of his indifference to the sensation which he made. His presence was welcomed by all—courted by many; he was ever received with the sweetest smiles—but it was in vain; he was excited for a month or so, but interested not for a moment, and the experiment failed. When the smiles of the world fell brightest upon him—when prophecies of future greatness were poured upon his ear, his heart was murmuring still the last words of his early friend—“Man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain.”

He envied all whom he saw busy and happy in the bustle and life; but while he envied he wondered. He wondered how motives so poor could prompt them to exertion; how joys to him so small and trifling, could give them happiness. He saw his friends—some in the agitations of love, some in the pains of rejection—and he envied them both sensations, for at least they were roused from indifference—but while he envied he wondered. Many of

the fair young creatures on whom his eye rested pleased his fancy for a moment, but none satisfied his taste, none interested his feelings, none touched the hidden chord which led to his heart.

It was strange that it was so, for his feelings were strong and lively—his disposition susceptible and romantic ; but, together with sensibility of feeling, he had that which is no rare accompaniment to feeling, a fastidiousness of taste which made it almost impossible to him to be pleased. Faults were glaring and painful—a word of levity, a false sentiment, a glance of vanity, by his observant eye instantly detected, served in a moment to dispel the charm which fancy might be weaving round a lovely face.

Indifferent and uninterested, his life was to him but as “an arrow flying in the dark,” and although to the thoughtless, life without an aim is no tedious thing, to the thoughtful it must ever be “a most unwelcome gift.”

Such was Reginald Lovel—who, as he sat and gazed on the pure brow and lofty beauty

of Ada Mowbray, felt that some new and strange and exciting feeling was springing up within him; and willingly and consciously he yielded himself to the full tide of happiness, without pausing to ask whither it might lead him. She was not without faults, even to him: but as Elizabeth Bennett said to Mr. Darcy, she had chosen her fault well. They are not faults so much as weaknesses; not faults, at least of such a kind, from which fastidiousness shrinks; and if a character like Ada's could once excite attention and affection, it was probable that her pride would but increase the fascination.

CHAPTER VI.

Le cœur seul concilie les choses contraires, et admet les incompatibles.

LA BRUYERE.

"Did you ever hear of the art of discovering character from handwriting?" asked Mr. Graham of Mrs. Mowbray one evening; "you can't think what a curious knack, or talent, or whatever it is, Lovel has got for doing it. No faults are safe from his penetrating eye; he points them out in your writing, one by one."

"No, indeed, I never heard of such a thing," said Mrs. Mowbray. "Is it true, Mr. Lovel?" turning to Lovel, who sat at the table near her. "'It sounds like nonsense,' as Mrs. Bertram said."

"I don't think it is nonsense," replied Lovel; "the knack or talent was taught me many years ago, and I have amused myself by improving it. It only requires watching, and attention to the varieties of the shapes of letters, turns, and flourishes, and a few other peculiarities."

"And you really think you discover a person's character from such things?"

"I generally satisfy *myself*," said Lovel, smiling; "I am not certain that I always satisfy other people, but sometimes I feel sure that I am right in my judgments, because I am so furiously contradicted. When that happens, I always know that I have hit on a very decided fault or weakness."

"I showed Lovel a bit of a letter before dinner to-day," continued Mr. Graham; "it was from a person of whom he can never even have heard; and he mentioned at once a very curious peculiarity in the character, such as I should have thought it would have required several days' acquaintance to discover."

"I must really try you, Mr. Lovel," ex-

claimed Mrs. Mowbray; and she drew her work-box towards her, and began to turn over its contents. "There," she said, giving him a side of a letter.

Lovel examined the writing. "I should say that a great part of this person's character might be summed up in one word—'Thrifty.' Am I right?" he inquired, looking up with a smile.

"Wonderful—a perfect picture. Really, Mr. Lovel, you have a very curious talent. Ada," she called to her daughter, who sat near her, answering Lord Rochford's course of daily questions; "do come here; I think you would be amused." Ada obeyed, little displeased at the interruption, and was followed by Lord Rochford.

"Look, Ada, Mr. Lovel professes to discover people's characters by examining their handwriting. I showed him Esther Freeland's writing," she said, lowering her voice, "and he said 'Thrifty'; was it not curious that he should fix upon such a word? But, Mr. Lovel, I must try you again. You shall not earn

your reputation by one success." And she took from her box a piece of paper, on which a few lines were written.

Lovel glanced at them, then returned it, and shook his head. "If I can mention some features in that character, it will not be from the handwriting that I discover them. I have had other means of judging of it." And he fixed his eyes with his sweet smile on Ada, as if to ask forgiveness for the confession of having observed her.

"Are you really a magician, Mr. Lovel? how did you know that that was Ada's handwriting?" asked Mrs. Mowbray.

"Not by any very wonderful art; I saw Miss Mowbray's name on her music last night."

"I should like to hear what you would say of Ada's character. I shall ask you about it another time."

I do not know whether it is from the desire of improving in that most difficult and profitable art, self-knowledge, but there appear to be few subjects more generally interesting than a discussion of character. People do not find

it very painful to be told of their virtues; there are many faults of which they are more inclined to be proud than ashamed, and they trust to the tact of their observer for not exposing those things of which they really are ashamed—little weaknesses, namely, and infirmities.

Many gathered about Lovel, with the request that he would look at their writing; but he resolutely declined to remark upon the characters of any one present.

"It is very unkind of you, Mr. Lovel," said Mrs. Vivian Hervey. "I do like this sort of thing better than anything in the world. I once had my head felt, and you can't think what curious things the man said about me."

"What did the man say?" asked Mr. Graham, curious to hear what could have been said about Mrs. Hervey.

"Oh, he said a great deal! Some words were so hard that I could not understand them, and some I have forgotten; but it was very curious, I know. Papa said so. Can't you remember, Vivian?"

"No, my dear Harriet, it was unfortunately before my happy day; and I have never been able to gather from your account what those curious things were."

"Well, then, do, Mr. Lovel, let me write a little bit. I should like so much to see my character, and then, perhaps, I should remember what the man said."

Lovel shook his head, laughingly, but continued—"As you are interested in such subjects, do you know the three questions, or rather the three answers, by which it is said that any character can be determined?"

"Oh, no! Do ask me."

"You are to name your favourite flower, and your favourite book, and the reign in modern history under which you would best like to have lived."

"Dear! how very curious, and how very interesting. But really, Mr. Lovel, can you tell people's characters from such things? You must be very clever."

"I don't know—I never tried; but I heard a discussion on the subject the other day."

"Am I like myself, Mr. Lovel?" inquired Mrs. Mowbray. "I like a rose for my flower, Walter Scott's novels for my book, and I had rather live at this present time than make any other selection."

"I don't know if you are like yourself, Mrs. Mowbray," said Mr. Graham, "but I am sure you are like me, for I shall say exactly the same."

"And *I* like a rose best," cried Mrs. Hervey.

"And *I*," said Lord Rochford.

"You see, Lovel, it won't do; we are all roses. Either there is a strange likeness between us, or your test is false."

"It is not my test; I only heard the question put. My test," he continued, laughing, "would be different. I would leave the flower, and change the book for a hero, and the reign for an action or a virtue. If you will all write down your opinions, I think I will prove the truth of *my* test, by returning to every owner their own document."

"Then you must go away, Mr. Lovel," said Mrs. Hervey, "and hide your face, and we will call you when we are ready."

"No, I must stay here to keep watch, for I won't allow any discussions. And you had better all write backwards, or the trial will not be a fair one."

He went, however, to a little distance, and turned over some prints.

He was quickly recalled, and a pile of papers, to all outward appearance exactly alike, were placed before him. His task was not very difficult, for the opinions were expressive enough.

On the first paper was written, "A moss rose *very* sweet—Charles the First—and good temper."

He gave it to Mrs. Hervey, with a smile. "I am sure it is yours; but why you like Charles the First so much, I don't quite understand."

"Oh, Mr. Lovel, because I think his face much the most interesting I ever saw. I often wish Vivian was like him."

On another paper was written, "A rosebud half opened—smiles—and the prettiest woman in the world."

"Oh, Vivian!" said Mrs. Hervey, as it was placed in her husband's hands, "how very funny you are; but do you know I don't like it, unless you mean me!"

He shook his head with an air of importance, and was disappointed because his wit elicited no further remark or discussion.

Not less characteristic was the following—

"A white camelia—the Emperor of Russia,—an act of self-devotion." Ada sat at some distance. Lovel merely glanced at her, and retained the paper in his hands.

"Now, do you allow that I have signalised myself?" he inquired, laughing, when, with but few mistakes, he had returned the whole collection.

"You have done pretty well," said Mr. Graham; "but I must just remark, that I should have done it quite as well myself."

"That remains to be proved. However, I confess there was little difficulty."

"*I* think it was *wonderful*, Mr. Lovel; and I think you are much the cleverest person I ever met with."

" My dear Harriet!" cried her husband, reprovingly.

" Yes, I do, Vivian; and I always shall, till you tell me what you meant by your prettiest woman in the world."

Lovel disengaged himself from the group, and went slowly round to the place where Ada sat. The others were still eagerly talking and quarrelling.

" I am afraid we have been too noisy for you," he said; for though she had joined in the amusement, her voice had never been heard.

" No; on the contrary, I have been amused," she replied. " I like to listen when people are talking."

“ Is it fair to be only a listener?” he said, playfully; “ if all were listeners, what would be the end of it?”

She smiled.

“ I am afraid you do not think it would be much to be regretted, if so dreadful a contingency should occur.”

“ I don’t think there is much danger of its

occurring," she said, glancing round with a look of amusement; "one or two may indulge in silence without great guilt."

"Are you a student of character, Miss Mowbray? does it amuse you to watch the varieties and strangenesses of human nature?"

"I think it would amuse me; I never considered the subject before. But I don't believe in your tests, Mr. Lovel; they are utterly false."

"I don't know that I believe in them myself; but are they always false?" he said, looking at her with a smile; and he returned to her the paper which he held in his hand.

She took it with a movement of some impatience, crushed it, and threw it into the fire.

"You do not wish to be judged by what you have written?" he said, remarking, with some surprise, the displeasure expressed in her countenance.

"Certainly not," she replied, with a shade of haughtiness in her manner. "It is a foolish thing to write one's opinions. I re-

pented of what I had written the moment afterwards."

"But was it not the truth?"

"The truth, in one sense. But *opinions* are not *feelings*. Some might misunderstand me."

"They might, certainly," he said; and his eyes rested upon her with no uncertain expression.

"I don't wish to be so misunderstood," she said, with increasing haughtiness; "one admires many things abstractedly, which one has no wish to see more nearly. I admire an act of self-devotion, but it is the very last action which I should wish to perform myself."

"To wish for it would, I suppose, be very heroic indeed," he replied, with a thoughtful smile; "and, perhaps, those who would be the first to say that they wished to perform such actions, would be the last in performing them, when the time to prove them came."

"No, indeed, Mr. Lovel," she said, more quietly, "I think you are wrong. I believe there are many people who do not live for

themselves, and do not wish to do so. I am not one of those."

"I believe there are many," he said, still thoughtfully; "but we know ourselves so little, that perhaps those who have the strongest feeling on such a subject, are the weakest when the trial comes. *I* feel that I should wish to live for others, but certainly my life does not fulfil my wish. *You* say, you do not wish it, and yet, if a time of necessity came, I believe."

"No!" she said, interrupting him, coldly and haughtily; "you mistake me altogether. I do not wish, and certainly I do not intend, ever to sacrifice myself, or my feelings, or my hopes, for the good of others. I wrote a foolish opinion; I do not even think I admire such sacrifices."

Ada was doing penance to herself, for a momentary expression of feeling; and, certainly, she judged herself but justly, when she said that she had neither the wish nor the intention of making a sacrifice.

She was, however, either inconsistent in her

opinions, or Lovel read the depths of her heart more truly than she did herself.

A large party were returning from church on the following day, when they came suddenly in sight of a fine view of Mowbray Castle. Mrs. Mowbray called Lovel's attention to the landscape.

" You said you admired the Castle, Mr. Lovel. How do you like it from here? This is Ada's favourite view."

The Castle stood on a rising ground, at about a quarter of a mile distant. It was a fine old building, not exactly such a castle as children draw, with two turrets and a straight wall between them, but with more pretensions to its name than castles usually have. Fine banks of wood surrounded it, and the view of the house was partly interrupted by magnificent oak trees, which grew somewhat fantastically on a slope of broken, uneven ground. It was a dull day, but a gleam of sunshine burst for a moment from the cloudy sky, and threw a variety of light and shade over the range of hills which made the background to the view.

The whole party stood still to admire.

"The park must be a very large one," said Lord Rochford; and he gazed at it complacently.

"That must be capital land down by the river!" exclaimed Sir Thomas Fairfax.

"Were you ever at B——, Mrs. Mowbray?" inquired Lady Fairfax. "We spent a Christmas there once with the Duke of ——, and this view of Mowbray Castle reminds me of it most strongly. Do you see the likeness, Sir Thomas?"

"You are very fond of Mowbray, are you not?" said Lovel, turning from the fair landscape to the fairer heiress of the scene.

"Very," she replied, with unusual earnestness.

Mrs. Mowbray walked on. Ada stood for a moment to watch the light creeping from the hills to the woods, from the woods to the house. Lovel also paused: he was watching another light stealing over her beautiful countenance.

"Has Mowbray Castle much history be-

longing to it?" he inquired. "I saw a very old date with a Mowbray's name in the church."

"The castle itself," she replied, "is only about a hundred and twenty years old; the old castle was destroyed in the civil wars. The Mowbrays were great sufferers at that time."

"How was it?" he said, reading interest in her face and manner.

"The family were very ardent royalists. One Mowbray was killed at Edgehill, the son of the house, the only one who could serve the king in person. The remainder served him in other ways," she continued, growing eager and excited as she spoke. "There was an old man, of eighty-four, and a child, a grandson, of nine years old. The old man received an intimation that he would be left in peace if he would pay a small sum to the parliamentary army; he refused, and lost house and lands in consequence. He, and his daughter-in-law, and his grandson, were driven from the castle, and the estates were confiscated. They remained in poverty for the rest of their days.

The old man's picture, by Vandyke, is in the long gallery."

"And were the estates restored at the Restoration?"

"No; they were bought back about a hundred and twenty years ago. There has always been a passion for Mowbray Castle in the Mowbray family, and a young man, the first Reginald Mowbray, my great-great-grandfather, made a vow in his youth that he would buy it back before he died. There are many strange tales about my ancestors."

"And do you admire the old man who left all for the king?"

"Yes, I do," she said, warmly. After a moment's thought, she continued—"The Mowbrays are a degraded race now; I hate to think of how much they have fallen, but perhaps"—she stopped.

"Do you think the Mowbrays of this day would be incapable of such an act of self-devotion?" Lovel asked, without raising his eyes.

"I did not say that," she replied, proudly;

"if the time came when great actions were possible, I do not think a Mowbray would ever be found wanting."

"I did not think they would," he said, looking at her with a smile of mingled playfulness and admiration.

She blushed slightly, and made no answer.

In this part of my tale, I must leave much work for imagination to do;—the progress of the acquaintance between Ada and Lovel—the unceasing interest with which he watched the development of her character, the light with which his imagination invested her, can better be imagined than described. I will hurry on towards the conclusion of the visit.

CHAPTER VII.

It was a moment he can ne'er forget—
A moment of sweet hope when first they met ;
He saw her and he loved her—then once more
Gushed forth the feelings he had felt of yore,
And mingled with the blessing of her love
Bright thoughts of peace below and bliss above.

LONDON : A POEM.

MANY visitors went and came, but many remained stationary till towards the end of a fortnight.

Mrs. Mowbray was extremely anxious for the entertainment of her guests. She was a kind-hearted, hospitable woman, and she would have been ready to turn the house upside down for their amusement, if she had had any encouragement to do so. In the days of her youth, at the villa where her father, a rich

merchant, had lived, diversions had been the order of the day,—dancing, acting, noisy games—all, in short, that indulgent parents could grant to wild spirited children, and guests of not the most refined description partake in and promote.

It is possible that if Mrs. Mowbray had been suddenly transported to one of the merry-makings of her early days, her feelings might not have been of a pleasurable description; but to the memory of those days, softened by distance, her mind fondly recurred, and she would have rejoiced to make the long silent echoes of Mowbray Castle resound with the sounds of festivity and mirth. But neither in her husband nor in her daughter was there any sympathy with such a desire.

No people are utterly independent of their fellow creatures; it is idle to think of it; but the desire and sense of companionship is in some far less than it is in others; and in Ada Mowbray it certainly was at this time as little as it was possible to be. She did not easily amalgamate with others—she had no cravings

for sympathy—she had none of those overflowings of spirits, which make the very exercise of the body a pleasure and a necessity to so many among the young. Hers was a proud and lonely nature, and she had yet to learn that her own taste was not to be the guide of the tastes of others; that a compliance with the wishes and pleasures, sometimes even with the whims, fancies, and follies of others, is not only expedient, but right. She was very civil to her father's guests, but she was no more—on Mrs. Mowbray the burden of entertaining fell.

To many hints both from Lady Fairfax and Mrs. Hervey “that amusements were very advisable when there were young people,” Mrs. Mowbray had turned a deaf ear, but before the party broke up, she determined to make an effort to please her guests by getting up one little dance. On proposing it to Mr. Mowbray, she received a not very unusual answer to her propositions, “that so as he was not annoyed, and so as she ran into no expense, he was quite indifferent how she

amused herself of an evening." This was permission sufficient to act upon, and she left her husband, in order to seek her daughter, hoping that Ada would interest herself in the plan, perhaps also with a faint hope that for once she should be giving pleasure to her daughter by such a proposition. She was always hoping that Ada would become more like other people—day by day was expecting to see the seeds spring up of vanity, giddiness, romance, and love,—all those softer and lighter qualities which she remembered to have felt in her own youth, and which she supposed to be latent in the heart of every woman.

She found Ada alone, and reading.

"I came to talk to you, Ada," she began, "about a little plan which I have for a dance to-morrow evening. We have never had such a thing. I think you have never been at a dance in your life, or not since you were quite a child, and perhaps it would amuse you for once. What do you think of the idea?"

"I don't quite understand you, mamma. Do you ask me if *I* should like a dance?"

"I thought it would be a good plan—the idea came into my head, and I hoped, my dear Ada, that it might not be disagreeable to you. Young people usually like dancing."

"If you wish to have a dance, mamma," said Ada, "I will dance, or do whatever you wish; but, once for all, let me say for myself, that such things do not amuse me. I dislike dancing, and I don't wish for amusement."

Mrs. Mowbray sighed. She knew her daughter's feelings well, but still their expression was a disappointment. She was going to speak again, but Ada heard her sigh, and went on again—

"I often think, mamma, that I must be a very unsatisfactory child for you to have, for I do not, and I never shall, care for any of these things; I should despise myself if I did."

"Despise, Ada! how foolish! Why should you despise yourself for liking what all the young have liked, and will like as long as the world lasts?"

"I don't know why, mamma. I should despise myself, I should feel degraded, if I

found that such a thing as mere dancing made me happy;" and she looked as if she already scorned herself at the bare idea. "But that does not matter: I only meant to say, that I was afraid I gave you no pleasure. I sometimes think that you must wish that Miss Fairfax was your daughter rather than me."

"Miss Fairfax! no, my beautiful Ada!" said her mother, fondly; "it would be strange indeed if I were not satisfied. I will not deny," she continued, however, after a moment, with a shade of sadness in her voice, "that I sometimes wish you were not so much above me,—sometimes wish that there was some way in which your mother could give you pleasure."

Ada was touched by the words. She stooped and slightly kissed her mother's cheek. Many would have said that, after such words, the action was coldly done; but what is coldness in some is warmth in others. We are not all formed alike; which is a truth trite and plain enough, and yet a truth which, in

our judgments of others, we are too apt to forget.

Mrs. Mowbray did not criticise the action; her eyes glistened at so unwonted a mark of feeling, but she knew her daughter too well to notice it, or remark upon it. She reverted to the subject of the dance.

"If you really do not object to it, Ada, I think it would be a good plan. Mrs. Hervey has several times said, how much she should like to dance; and Lady Fairfax would like it, I am sure, for her daughter. She says Miss Fairfax is very fond of dancing, when she is not too shy to enjoy it; and I think your kindness to her has made her feel more comfortable here than, from her mother's account, she usually is when she is away from home."

"I shall be quite ready, mamma, to dance, if you wish it. Can I do anything else to help you?"

"No, thank you, Ada. We must not make much fuss, or your father will not like it. I only wish to have twelve or thirteen couple. I will write to the Miss Maxwells and the

Miss Saviles, and I dare say Lady Fairfax will like to send for her daughters. I will go and talk to her, as you do not dislike my idea."

As the door of Ada's room closed, the mother and daughter both sighed. Mrs. Mowbray, because not even the attempt to please her mother had been able to light one spark of interest in Ada's mind; and Ada, with the thought, as she turned again to her book—a ‘Life of Cromwell’—“Oh, that I were a man, and not a woman—a young girl,—whose duty even it seems to be to take interest in such trifling enjoyments, such petty cares!” and she threw herself back in her chair, with an expression of impatience and disdain at her destiny.

On the morning of the day fixed by Mrs. Mowbray for her dance, as the whole party (with the exception of Mr. Mowbray, who always breakfasted in his own room) sat at breakfast, a servant came in with a large tray of books.

“Mr. Mowbray desired me to bring them

to you, ma'am,—he has unpacked the box in his own room."

" You can lay them down; we will look at them after breakfast. They are our new books from London," continued Mrs. Mowbray, in explanation. " Mr. Mowbray always makes his selection first, and sends us what he calls the trash, but I am generally very well satisfied with our share. I hear some very good novels have lately come out."

" Are you fond of reading novels, Miss Mowbray?" inquired Lord Rochford, of Ada, who sat by his side.

" Not very. Occasionally I meet with one I like, but not very often."

" Ada would like them better if they were not about love," said her mother, smiling. " Such, at least, was her opinion three or four years ago. Do you remember, Ada, a conversation we once had? I dare say you are of the same opinion still."

" I quite agree with Miss Mowbray," remarked Lord Rochford. " I never read novels because they are such stuff. I wonder people can be found to write them."

"Not like novels to be about love, Miss Mowbray?" cried Mrs. Vivian Hervey. "I never heard of such a thing; why, what should they be about?"

"I have often heard Miss Mowbray's objection stated," remarked one of the gentlemen who sat at breakfast, "and I must say that it seems to me a plausible one; but, then again, as Mrs. Hervey says, what are novels to be about?"

"It seems to be a plausible one," said Lovel, "because we must allow, that there is not so much love in real life as we find in novels; but I think if you consider the subject, you will see that the choice of love in all times, as the leading subject of fiction, has been a judicious one."

"Pray give us your reasons, Mr. Lovel," said Mrs. Mowbray. "I have always been very well satisfied without reasons, but I should like to hear what can be *reasonably* said in defence of this poor, much abused love."

"Why, I think that what we chiefly wish to see in novels, is the trial of character, the

idea of the character well sustained in trying circumstances; for this we must have some strong passions,—for there is no real trial except where a man feels deeply. Many passions may do for this,—ambition, hatred, revenge, love of money; they may be tried, and have been tried occasionally very successfully, but they only do occasionally, for they offer little variety, and are of individual, not of universal interest. Love, on the contrary, either has been felt, or will be felt in some degree, by all, and therefore, we can all place ourselves in the circumstances of the trial springing from this passion. Do you see what I mean, Mrs. Mowbray?"

"Whoe'er thou art, thy master see,
He was, or is, or is to be,"

soliloquised Mr. Graham.

"Mr. Lovel has explained this much better than I did when you asked me the question, has he not, Ada?" said Mrs. Mowbray, looking at her daughter.

Ada slightly smiled, but made no answer.

She never engaged in arguments for the defence of her opinions, but it appeared to her that Lovel was rather begging the question, as she denied that love was a subject of universal interest.

“ Oh! Mr. Lovel,” cried Mrs. Hervey, “ I am so very glad that such a clever person as you are should like novels to be about love, because now Vivian can never laugh at me again.”

“ You must understand,” said Lovel, smiling, “ that though I advocate the principle of the plot of novels turning in general upon love, I am not at all an admirer of the sentimental trash that is talked in most novels under the name of love. All I mean to say is, that as there is no passion which, while a man is under its influence, is felt so nearly or so deeply, so there are no circumstances in which the hidden character is displayed so clearly; and this makes it a very fitting subject for books whose professed object it is, to paint human nature.”

“ Well, still, Mr. Lovel, you are a great

deal better than Vivian, for he is not the least ashamed to say that he likes ‘Boswell’s Life of Johnson’ better than ‘Ethel Churchill.’ ”

“ I never had the pleasure to read ‘Ethel Churchill,’ ” replied Lovel; “ but I am afraid when I have done so, that I shall be obliged to join Mr. Hervey’s side against you.”

“ You must be contented with having me on your side, Mrs. Hervey,” said Mr. Graham. “ I never read anything but novels and the ‘Sporting Magazine,’ and I am sure I like them both better than ‘Boswell’s Life of Johnson.’ ”

“ Oh, Mr. Graham! then don’t you like ‘Ethel Churchill?’ ”

“ Very much. I read it about three weeks ago, and I don’t remember one syllable of it now.”

“ Oh, Mrs. Mowbray! what dreadful creatures all men are—how can you listen to them;” and Mrs. Hervey got up from the table, and hurried away to the tray of books. “ Oh, Mrs. Mowbray,” she called again, after turning them about for a few minutes, “ here

is ‘Ellen Wareham,’ which I am dying to read; people tell me that it is enough to kill one with crying. Will you be so very kind as to lend it to me to read to-day, to pass away the time till the evening—the dear, delightful evening you have promised us?”

“I did not know before, Harriet,” said her husband, “that tears were a proper preparation for a ball.”

“Oh, yes, they are. I never enjoy dancing so much as when I have been utterly miserable all day. I know I shall cry my eyes out over this, so you had better not come near me, Vivian;” and she seized her book, and hurried away with it to her room.

Mrs. Hervey spent the day in floods of tears over the “Recollections of a Chaperon,” then appeared gaily dressed, and radiant with enjoyment, ready for the dance in the evening.

“Oh, Miss Mowbray,” she said, as she stood with Ada in the drawing-room, after dinner, “I do expect to enjoy myself so



very much to-night. How kind it was of Mrs. Mowbray to think of this dance for us. I peeped into the ball-room, and it is so prettily ornamented with flowers, it will be quite a pleasure in itself to look at it. I wish it was time to begin. Don't you feel very happy, Miss Mowbray?"

"I am glad you like the idea of dancing," said Ada, civilly.

"Oh, yes! I like it. I always do like dancing better than anything. I wonder how long the ball will last. I wonder if Mrs. Mowbray will let us dance till five o'clock to-morrow morning?"

"I dare say she will have no objection, if you are not tired."

"Oh! I am never tired of dancing. I often think, that if I danced all my life, I should want no sleep at all. I am sure you can't half like it, Miss Mowbray, if you talk about being tired; can she, Miss Fairfax? Are you ever tired?"

"Not very easily. I like dancing very much."

"Oh! then, do have a valse with me," and, before Miss Fairfax could answer, she threw her arm round her waist and whirled her down the room.

"I see you are surprised at that mad thing, Miss Mowbray," said Lady Fairfax, approaching Ada; "but it is just the way with all young people now,—this passion for dancing seems to be quite the fashion. We were staying at Lord St. Leger's at Christmas, and I assure you the Lady Grahams danced from morning till night. As soon as breakfast was over they used to collect as many people as they could, and hurry away to a long gallery, and there they danced till luncheon time, and if it rained, again in the afternoon, and always all the evening. I wonder how any strength can stand it; but they never seemed to be tired. There was one poor thing, a cousin, I think, who looked as if a breath would blow her away, but she was the wildest of all. Are you fond of valsing, Miss Mowbray?"

"No."

"Perhaps you object to it. I know many people do."

"I don't object to it for others," replied Ada; "but I dislike it for myself."

"Ah! that was Amelia's feeling. When first we went to London, she said she would not valse, and I allowed her to have her own way for some time, for I was not sure about it myself; but then I found that she got no partners, and I was told that it was always the way with girls that only danced quadrilles; and so I desired her to take to valsing, and she is very fond of it now. Habit is everything. We are entirely creatures of habit, Miss Mowbray. My dear Amelia, do stop valsing; you will be all in disorder before the dance begins. You had better go and see if you can help your sisters. I left them complaining very much of Vyner's slowness; but, as I told them, a maid has but one pair of hands."

A dance is a dance all the world over, and there is not much to say about it. This present dance was kept up with great spirit, principally owing to the exertions of Mrs. Hervey and Georgina Fairfax—a wild girl, handsome, lively, and rather clever—upon

whose friendship, immediately struck up with some violence with Mr. Graham, Lady Fairfax looked with averted but delighted eyes. Her own opinion was very much against a flirtation: she often loudly lamented the tendency of girls to flirt; but when she saw her own daughter's charms appreciated, it was a different thing. She might, and did, perhaps, shake her head; but it was a private shake, and accompanied with the reflection, "Georgina is so handsome, and her manners are so attractive, that it is no wonder people should be taken with her."

Late in the evening, at the beginning of a long valse, Lovel approached Ada, as she stood for a moment alone.

He had watched her during the night with mingled feelings of admiration and wonder. She had been beset with people, for by many she was seen for the first time; and her graceful and beautiful figure, as she moved through the dance, had excited universal interest and attention. But she had remained cold and indifferent—her thoughts far from the gay

throng—her cheek untinged—her eye unkindled by the excitement of the homage paid by every eye to her surpassing charms.

“To what region are her fancies soaring?” he asked himself, as his eyes rested upon her; and with something of the same question upon his lips, he approached her, and stood by her side.

She received him with a smile. That she had pleasure in his society, not even he, though at all times diffident of himself in a singular degree, could doubt.

“No, I don’t dislike it,” she said, in answer to his question. “Did you think I did?”

“I thought you did not seem to belong to the scene,” he replied; “to be absent—not present, I mean—your thoughts far away.”

“My thoughts were here,” she said; “you are wrong. I was at this moment wondering if any human beings could really feel pleasure in *that*.” And her eye glanced with something of scorn at the whirling dancers.

“It is excitement, and, as such, pleasing. I must confess that I have sometimes liked it

myself. But you," he continued, looking at her, "are above excitements, or the wish for them."

"No; not all!"

"I think it is so. I mean the common excitements of common human nature. I don't judge only from what I have observed to-night; but let me remind you of this morning; you then disclaimed a very usual amusement and excitement—novel reading—and very nearly," he added, with a smile, "another of a stronger nature."

"I do *not* care for such things," she replied; "I don't mean to say that I am not sometimes interested in novels; but they must be of a particular kind to please me. I have been reading 'Rienzi' to-day, and I like it."

"Ambition."

"Yes, ambition. I can feel for the hopes and fears of ambition."

"And not for those of love?"

"Not much."

"You often speak of ambition," he said, after a moment's thought; "are you really

and indeed as ambitious as your words would lead one to suppose?"

"Yes, I am ambitious, I know; I confess, that to rise, to be great, appears to me to be the only object in this world worth striving for."

"Greatness!—with what object, what hope?"

"Is not greatness an object in itself?" she asked, with some surprise.

"Is it—what! worldly greatness?" She did not answer; and, looking at her, with a degree of painful interest, he continued—"Rank, riches, splendour! do these constitute greatness in your eyes?"

"Means of greatness," she replied, with some hesitation. "Yes."

He stood in deep thought. A new and unpleasing light had fallen on her character.

"I feel," she continued, as if desirous to explain herself, and speaking with unusual animation—"I feel, that if one could stand above, high above all, that it would be like reaching the mountain top; the air would be more

pure, the pulse of life would beat more freely."

"But the mountain-top is a cold and lonely place," he said, with some earnestness; "unless good or great deeds, which have won the blessing of mankind, place you there. Those who try to reach it as a mere resting-place of selfish greatness, find nothing but clouds and snow.

"Though high *above* the sun of glory glow,
And far *beneath* the earth and ocean spread,
Round it are barren rocks."

"It may be so," Ada said; "but I think it would satisfy me that it *was* the mountain-top."

"And is this dream of lonely grandeur your ideal of happiness?" he said, with a tone of sadness in his voice.

"Do my opinions surprise you?" was her reply.

"They do, indeed. I cannot appreciate them."

"Have *you* no ambition, Mr. Lovel?" she

asked, turning towards him, after a short silence.

“Yes, I have ambition,” he said, thoughtfully.—“Not like yours; I could not care for greatness for my own sake; but if I had an object worth toiling for, I often think my ambition would startle the world.”

“And what object should you think worth toiling for?” she asked, with unusual interest.

“There are some kinds of ambition that I wish I could claim,” he replied, in the same thoughtful tone; for in her society the higher aspirations of his boyhood had begun to stir again. “In my early youth I used to dream great dreams—dreams of works that I was to do, great works for God and for man—but they have been too long forgotten or neglected for me to dare to say that they could animate me now; but what I do now, at this moment, feel is, that no toil could weary me, no difficulty dishearten me, no height be too high for me, if by my greatness I could hope to win one spark of interest from one I loved.”

Ada was moved, either by the tone of his

voice or by the contrast his ambition presented to hers. A faint blush passed over her cheek, and with thoughtful, downcast eyes, she said, "Your ambition is holier than mine."

"Do you indeed say so?" he said, looking up at her softened countenance with a look of irrepressible admiration.

But the momentary softness was past, and was followed, as in Ada it usually was, by scorn at herself for having allowed its influence. "I may acknowledge it," she said, haughtily, "and yet neither change, nor wish to change, my own opinions."

"You will change them,—I hope—I feel that you will."

"Why should you wish me to change them," she said, her coldness forgotten in surprise at his earnestness. "My dreams of ambition have been with me from my childhood, and they are the last from which I wish to part."

"Because they are unworthy of you," he said, almost passionately.

She turned away her head, he fancied, offended—perhaps he was mistaken.

"Forgive me," he continued, "I know I speak as I should not speak, but if you knew, if you could care to know, or I could dare to tell, what thoughts the sight of you has excited in my mind, you would not wonder that I should fear lest my ideal should be destroyed. Thoughts and hopes I mean," he added hurriedly, fearing a misconception of his meaning, "of once seeing with my own eyes that which I have almost despaired to find."

The valse was over, the conversation interrupted, and, considering the dangerous ground on which Lovel was treading, in good time.

They were joined by Mrs. Hervey, as they stood together in silence. "Oh! Miss Mowbray," she exclaimed, "we have had *such* a valse; I never enjoyed one so much before—there is nothing like valsing; I do pity you so much for not liking it—you really do not know what happiness is without it—one feels like a bird, and as careless as a bird, when one is whirling through the air in that way. How can you like those stupid lazy quadrilles so much?"

"I don't like them at all—I don't like dancing; I only think them better than valsing."

"Oh! dear, how I do pity you, and I can't understand it. And you too, Mr. Lovel, don't you like dancing—do you never valse?"

"I am afraid I occupy a very small portion of your thoughts," he said, smiling; "for I have already valed twice this evening."

"Have you, really? How odd that I should not have seen you; but then as you do valse, I wish you would valse with me, for I am sure you can valse very well."

"I shall be very happy."

"Oh! then, let it be next time, for I am not engaged; and mind you don't forget, for I never forgive that. Do you see that Miss Fairfax?—did you ever see such a flirtation?" she continued, glancing to another part of the room; "it is quite romantic really—what I call love at first sight. Now, why do you smile, Mr. Lovel? You have the most provoking smile I ever saw. I assure you it is quite love; he has danced with her five times, and I saw

him just now break off one of those pretty pink camellias, and give it to her; see, she has got it in her gown. Vivian says, giving a single flower means a great deal—much more than a nosegay; he never gave me a single flower till the day before he proposed, and then it was a rosebud. I kept the leaves of the flower for a long, long time, months afterwards, and then my stupid maid threw them away. I was so cross with her!"

" You kept the dead leaves of the flower?" said Ada, contemplating her with a look of curious scrutiny.

" Oh! dear, yes, Miss Mowbray; why that is a very common thing to do. I know a great many lovers who keep dead leaves and old nosegays. I dare say you have done it, Mr. Lovel?"

" Never!" he said; "but I never had the temptation, for I don't think any one ever gave me a nosegay."

" Oh! Miss Mowbray, do give Mr. Lovel a flower, I am sure he would keep it; he looks quite the sort of person who would do such a thing—now should you not, Mr. Lovel?"

"It would not be freely given, and therefore not a fair trial," said Lovel, smiling—for he feared Ada's displeasure. But as his eyes involuntarily glanced towards her, he saw the same soft faint blush passing over her cheek, which once before, on that evening, had made his heart bound within him.

CHAPTER VIII.

Love's not a flower that grows on the dull earth ;
Springs by the calendar—must wait for sun,
For rain—matures by parts—must take its time
To stem, to leaf, to bud, to blow.—It owns
A richer soil, and boasts a quicker seed !
You look for it and see it not ; and lo !
E'en while you look, the peerless flower is up,
Consummate in the birth.

THE HUNCHBACK.

MR. GRAHAM followed Lovel to his room, when, at a late hour, though not sufficiently late to please Mrs. Hervey, the dance was ended.

" Well, Lovel," he said, " we have been pretty well engaged this evening."

" *You* have," said Lovel, smiling.

" I know I have—I say, I have ; I am never

ashamed of what I do. I have been amusing myself very well, and Miss Fairfax better. Now, be as honest as I am, and tell me what you have been doing."

"I have been looking at you," replied Lovel, "and wondering when you will learn a little discretion."

"Very well; look and wonder as much as you please; but now, Lovel, since you have refused to be honest, and have taken upon yourself to reprove, expect no mercy. I am going to search the depths of your heart."

"I am afraid the search will not much interest you; you had better go to bed—it is past three o'clock."

"No, no—I want to talk to you; I have some questions to ask, and here I stay till I am answered;" and he threw himself into a large chair by the fire.

"Come, Lovel," he continued, "I want to give you advice, and all sorts of good things; but how can I advise unless I am informed on a few points. Don't attempt to deceive me, but confess at once that the impregnable for-

tress of your heart has surrendered itself into the keeping of the high and mighty princess, Ada Mowbray."

" You know I hate this sort of conversation, Graham; but I have no wish to deceive you. I will confess it, and now let us have done with it."

" By no means; now comes the time for advice. I say, Lovel, I see no manner of reason why you should not make up to the heiress."

" Nor more should I, Graham, if I were you."

" I believe there is some very deep bitterness concealed in that speech, but I cannot pause to notice it. Now I say again, I see no reason why you should not marry Miss Mowbray, if you have any fancy for doing so. Since I saw that you had done so strange a thing as to fall in love with that piece of ice, I have considered the point in many ways, and I do not see any reason why you should be so backward. You are as good as she is, and better in every respect, except that one

important article, filthy lucre, and to counter-balance the possession of filthy lucre you have talents, and very fair prospects of worldly advantage, and I think I have somewhere read that wisdom is better than house or lands. Well, Lovel, what do you say?"

"I am very much obliged to you for your advice, but it is perfectly useless to me."

"Then you are a fool, for you *must* see that whatever heart Miss Mowbray has—and that is not much, I fancy—is in your power. I don't mean to say she is in love with you—oh! dear no, that would be a work of years—but she likes you, and she likes nobody else. She smiles, and prettily, I confess;—she has a very sweet smile, her only redeeming point—when you speak to her; she looks pleased when you sit by her at dinner, and if you do not, she——"

"Come, Graham, no more of this," Love said, angrily; "talk of me if you please, but leave Miss Mowbray alone."

"I shall talk of Miss Mowbray as much as ever I choose. I came to talk about her. I

tell you, Lovel, that if you choose you can make her in love with you. I see these things clearly. I see that little Miss Fairfax is in love with you—ah! you know that without my telling. I see that, too. I see everything; nothing ever escapes me; and I tell you, Lovel, your happiness is in your own hands. I am so convinced of this, that I would bet upon you, in opposition to Rochford."

"So would I," said Lovel, laughing; "there would not be much danger there."

"I don't know. Though in a peculiar fashion, Rochford is evidently courting. It is a courtship which would not usually be very effective, I fancy; but different people have different opinions; and let me tell you, £40,000 a-year is rather a dangerous rival."

"A love that had such a £40,000 a year for a rival, would, I should fancy, soon be cured," Lovel said, musingly.

"Not a bit of it. Nor would it cure yours, Lovel, if even now you should hear that Rochford was to carry off the prize."

"If it were possible," Lovel replied, his confidence in the beauty of Ada's character overcoming his reserve, "that I could dare to dream of Miss Mowbray for myself, I should not fear Rochford's rivalry."

"You would be foolish, then. For my part, I had rather marry Rochford than any one in England. Give him his way on a few points, and he would make a docile beast. It would be no bad joke to have the guidance of £40,000 a year; and many young ladies would, I fancy, think as I do. Besides, poor old soul, there is no harm in him. He is a fool, there is no denying it, and a solemn one, and a stingy, which is worse; but otherwise, he is a good-natured creature. What do you suppose Miss Mowbray thinks of him?"

"Much as you do, judging from appearances."

"I don't know. Perhaps you are right. She baffles my penetration, except on that one point, which is enough for you to think about. You have been doing pretty well to-night; your conversation, though short, was interest-

ing—I saw that. Pursue your advantage, and I wish you success, with all my heart.” Lovel shook his head. “Really, Lovel, I see no reason for you to talk of not daring. To put you in good humour with yourself, and in order to conclude this evening with a little piece of sentiment, I must tell you that, although for myself I should infinitely prefer Rochford as a husband; yet for my daughter, my sweet Mary Graham, as I mean her to be called, I should prefer you to any man in England, even if your worldly circumstances were much worse than they are.”

“ You are very kind,” Lovel said, smiling; “and I ought to be satisfied with myself; for, I am sure, sweet Mary Graham would be a bride for a king.”

“ Well, good night; and you will take my advice.”

He shook his head again. But to say that Ada’s blush and Graham’s words did not haunt and dazzle his imagination, would be saying more than truth, perhaps, would warrant.

Lovel was romantic. His natural disposition was romantic. He had that peculiar blending of strength of reason, and self-control, with ardour of mind, and enthusiasm of imagination, which forms, in its true sense, not in the school-girl's sense of the word, the romantic character. It is a character which is said to belong, or often to be found amongst, those who are the natural inhabitants of mountainous districts; something poetic and picturesque, a smothered enthusiasm, a smouldering fire, waiting but a spark to light it into a blaze. Love was the first spark that fell on Lovel's mind; but it was equally susceptible to many others, (some good, some not so good; for there were two natures within him,) if their light had been bright enough to arrest his attention.

Lest, however, in the rapid growth of his attachment to Ada, he should be thought to be too romantic, I must say a few words on the subject.

Some kinds of affection need a long acquaintance, to bring them first into bud, then into

flower; but there is a kind founded less on what is called sympathy, than on reverence and admiration, which needs only so long a time as the mind requires to be convinced that admiration is due. Once convinced, the feelings follow spontaneously. It does not always follow that love is the consequence of such feelings; rather the reverse. It is only here and there, one mind in a thousand, amongst men especially, which prefers to look up. It is, perhaps, one of the characteristics of a romantic mind that it must look up—that it imparts something chivalrous to its attachment, not always in the eyes of men fixing its devotion justly; but when unjustly, gilding the chosen object with a glory from its own imagination.

In addition to this, it has always seemed to me that *time*, a mere succession of hours, is not a question much affecting the higher parts of man. His thoughts are free and swift as the wind—a light, opening boundless fields of knowledge, has fallen in a moment of time; and the feelings are as unfettered as they. It is the intensity of thought, not the length of

study, it is the intensity of feeling, not the duration of hours, which makes either knowledge or passion a part of ourselves.

“The bee and butterfly
Live longer in one active sunny hour,
Than the poor tortoise in his torpid years.”

Be this, however, as it may, it was certain that, in one fortnight, Lovel's whole nature was changed. Wrapt in the intensity of feeling with which he watched Ada, he was not aware of it himself; but her aspiring thoughts and words had awakened, as with a trumpet's voice, dreams and hopes in his heart, ambitious as hers, but of a higher and a purer kind. The arguments he would have addressed to her upon the unworthiness of selfishness were echoing loudly in his own mind. The veil was lifted from the world, and his eyes were awake to see its beauty. What would be the fruit yet, it was hard to say, for such stirrings as often end in evil as in good.

CHAPTER IX.

Vain visionary hopes—how swift they flew;
How false the joys his flattering fancy drew;
Yet, lady, had it been his lot to win
A form so fair, a heart so free from sin,
Then had he loved thee as thou shouldst be loved,
And thou hadst proved him as he would be proved.

LONDON: A POEM.

Oh! what shall now my faith restore,
In holy things and fair;
We met, I saw thy face once more,
The world's breath had been there.

MRS. HEMANS.

“ Is no one going out to-day?” asked Lovel,
turning from the window of the library at
Mowbray Castle, the day after the dance.

Lord Rochford strolled to the window,
looked out, and shook his head. “ One can

do nothing in the snow. I wish it never did snow."

The prospect without was certainly not inviting. It had been snowing all the morning, and the snow lay thick on the ground. Overhead, the sky was dull and gloomy; a cold north-east wind alone preventing a further fall. But Lovel thought it more inviting than the prospect within. The whole party then at Mowbray Castle were assembled in the library, with the exception of Mr. Mowbray, (who, in his dressing gown and slippers, was reading a French novel by the fire in his own room,) and Ada, who had not appeared since luncheon,—and on the spirits and powers of entertainment of the whole assembly, something of the damp and gloom of the cold snowy day, had settled. Lovel had borne it for some time, in the hope that Ada would appear; but as she neither came, nor was mentioned by Mrs. Mowbray as being likely to come, he began to think of escape.

"It does not look very agreeable out there, certainly," he said; "but still, anything is

better than sitting at home all the afternoon."

"How very uncivil you are, Mr. Lovel," cried Mrs. Hervey, in her silvery voice; "I am quite shocked at you. When you remember that we are all going to part to-morrow, you should not be in such a hurry to get away from us."

"It is to make me more fit to enjoy your society," he said, laughing. "'Absence,' you know,—I forget what the saying is that I meant to quote, but I know the application is, that I should only be fit to live among savages if I stayed at home all day."

"You were going to say, 'Enough is as good as a feast.' Now you know you were, Mr. Lovel; don't deny it."

"No, it was something prettier than that; something very pretty, in fact; but I quite forgot the words. I will try and remember them while I am walking. Come, Graham, don't be lazy; come and take a walk."

"Not for twenty pounds," he replied; "it is the sort of day that irritates my temper

beyond bearing. I put my head out of the window before luncheon to see if it was possible, and immediately became like Southey's traveller,—

‘With blue cold nose, and wrinkled brow,
Traveller, whence comest thou?’

so I pulled in my head again, and am very grateful to be allowed to sit by the fire the rest of the day. I wish you a pleasant walk.”

Lovel left the room.

“Where is Miss Mowbray this afternoon?” inquired Lord Rochford.

“I don’t know,” replied Mrs. Mowbray; “but I dare say she is gone out. Ada hardly ever stays at home.”

“Miss Mowbray gone out, to-day!” shrieked Mrs. Hervey. “Good gracious! you don’t mean it?”

“Is it not rather imprudent?” asked Lord Rochford. “The snow must be quite wet under foot.”

“I dare say some of the walks are swept; but if not, Ada does not mind. She never

cares for wind or weather, or heat, or cold, or fatigue of any kind. I often tell her that she ought to have been a man ; she could then have been a general or a statesman, or anything she pleased ; and I am sure she would have done more, and endured more, than men in general do."

"What an excellent wife she will make me," said Lord Rochford, to himself,—aloud he said, "I wonder that Miss Mowbray does not like riding. I should have thought that the exercise would have suited her exactly." Ada's dislike of riding weighed heavily on Lord Rochford's mind.

"So should I," said Mrs. Mowbray ; "but Ada has always had a particular dislike to it. She can walk for any distance, and I believe she likes walking better than anything else. She finds it more independent. You are a great rider—are you not, Miss Fairfax?" turning to Georgina Fairfax, who was doing a crochet purse, at a little distance, and was dividing her attention between the purse and Mr. Graham.

"Oh, yes! I like riding better than anything else in the world; only I never yet found a horse that went fast enough."

"For shame, Georgy," said her mother; "Mrs. Mowbray will think you quite wild."

"It's quite true, mamma; the faster I go, the faster I wish to go. Flying through the air on a horse, is the only thing that I call really living; one feels like a superior being then."

"Really, Georgy, you talk quite foolishly."

"Oh, no! mamma; very wisely. Dr. Johnson liked flying along in a post-chaise better than anything in life,—at least, he thought he did; but if he had known what a good gallop was, he would have liked that still better." She wilfully, but prettily, shook back her dark curls as she spoke.

He: "What a very handsome girl!" thought Lord Rochford, to himself; and he fixed his eyes upon her with an admiring stare. "I wish Miss Mowbray was fond of riding."

"I think he would have liked a good valse better," said Mrs. Hervey.

"I should like to have seen you valse with him, Harriet," remarked her husband.

"A good valse is a good thing," said Georgina Fairfax; "but one depends so much on one's partner. Now a horse is one's own,—of course, one does not speak of a bad horse,—and, though, in fact, one is carried along, it feels like perfect freedom."

Mr. Graham stooped his head, and made some remark, which brought a slight blush to Miss Fairfax's cheek, and caused a slight toss of her head; but the exact purport of the remark did not transpire. Lady Fairfax became a little more upright at the moment, and counted the stitches of her knitting.

Lovel, meanwhile, had left the house. As he opened the door, the wind that blew on his face,—a north-east wind charged with snow,—was so piercing and knife-like, that he was on the point of retreating, when his eye fell on some small foot marks, which had left their traces in the snow that lay upon the steps. As may be supposed, the door was closed, and he went resolutely on. At the

bottom of the steps the traces ceased, for the walks near the house were, at the moment, being swept. He could trust, therefore, to chance only, for giving him a sight of Miss Mowbray.

He had turned into the park, and, again shuddering under the keen blast which blew up the sloping meadows, was meditating on the impossibility of Ada's facing so piercing a whirlwind, when suddenly, in the path, at a great distance, a figure appeared. He went quickly on, and in a short time met Miss Mowbray.

She was returning to the house quietly, and without any appearance of having been disturbed by the weather. She was dressed very properly for a walk in the country; but there was no fur, no muffling; her veil was thrown back, and except a slight increase of colour on her cheek, her face was as white and as smooth as usual. She appeared to be as much above the influence of the elements, as she was above that of her fellow-creatures. She stopped for an instant when Lovel met her.

"I left everybody at home by the fire," he said; "and I confess that I came out unwillingly myself. Are you independent of the influence of such a day as this?"

"I rather like the cold," she replied.

"And is this, too, ambition?" he asked, with a smile.

"Perhaps," she said, also with a smile, then slightly moving her head, she went on.

Lovel continued his walk in the contrary direction. It may be thought that this meeting was scarcely worth the hopes and plans of a whole afternoon, but he was tolerably well satisfied, and his mood of mind—though full of thought upon the faults and virtues of Ada's character—was not unpleasing.

He had wandered for some little way, when, as he turned a corner, a pretty ornamented cottage suddenly appeared standing a little retired from the path, with a flower garden before it. It struck Lovel that this must belong to some old servant of the house, and he determined to venture in, in the hope of hearing Miss Mowbray's praises from the no insig-

nificant judgment of the poor. A bright fire shining through the windows, and his chilled fingers, were his excuse to himself for his intrusion. He crossed the little garden, and knocked at the door.

It was opened by a neat picturesque-looking old woman, with a snow-white cap and apron, and silver hair.

"I beg your pardon for knocking," Lovel began; "I came to ask you to let me warm my hands at your bright fire. It looked very tempting from the road."

"You comes from the Castle, sir, I s'pose?" Lovel nodded. "Ax no pardon, then, sir, for you be's very welcome;" and she led the way into her little kitchen, which, with its blazing fire, ornamented dresser, old ticking clock, round table covered with work, and old-fashioned arm-chair, looked the very picture of comfort. She drew the chair nearer to the fire, and insisted on Lovel's using it, then stood respectfully before him.

"I can't sit down unless you do," he said, getting up again; and fetching a high-backed

chair from the wall, he placed it on the other side of the fire.

" You be's just like Miss Mowbray," said the old woman, as she sat down and smoothed her apron; " her never can abear to see me stand."

A feeling of consciousness prevented Lovel from seizing this opportunity of plunging into a discussion of Ada's character, and deferring it, he looked round the room.

" Have you lived here long? Your cottage seems to be very comfortable and convenient."

" I've lived here twenty-one years, come next Michaelmas, sir; and I comed here, from the Castle, when the present Mr. Mowbray, Master Charles as was, married and comed down here with the bride. He come down with a power of new-fangled servants, a vast deal too fine for me, and I comed away, but my master, Mr. Reginald Mowbray, had been fond of me, and Master Charles knew it; and the bride, Mrs. Mowbray, as is, she took to me vastly, and so, between them all, I got into this house, and here I've lived, sir, twenty-one years, come next Michaelmas, if I lives so long."

Lovel repeated his praises on the beauty and comfort of the cottage. They had indeed struck him very much, as the comforts of the poor are often apt to strike us, almost with a feeling of envy.

"Well, sir, it be well enough, but it be's very sultry in the summer, in them July days, and I feels the cold on a day like this."

He laughed at the old woman's grumble, but entered into her feelings, and very shortly his kind, engaging manners, which placed her on a level with himself—an attention which the poor feel most deeply, what they call being "familiar"—so completely won Mrs. Watkyn's heart, that she drew her chair nearer to the fire, and requested him to do the same.

"You ben't a thinking of going yet, sir?" she said, as he twirled his hat in his hand; "I like a bit of society now and then, and not a soul been inside my doors to-day, unless Miss Mowbray."

"If you have had Miss Mowbray, you have had a visitor for which most people would envy you."

"So they would, sir, and I loves to have Miss Ada here; but, then, her comes a'most every day."

"Does she, indeed, come to see you every day? That is very kind of her."

"So it be, sir, but Miss Mowbray is fond of me; so was her grandpapa, Mr. Reginald Mowbray, as was, before her. Howsomever, there is not a kinder or a better in all the country than Miss Ada. I says so, sir, and I knows what I says."

"So I should fancy," said Lovel; the old woman's shrill voice sounding like perfect music in his ears; "but some say otherwise."

"I knows they does. Oh! I hears all that; they says so because her be a bit stately, because her be as grand as any queen, because there ben't one in the country so beautiful as she. But you should see her, sir, when her comes here: her takes that little stool and her draws it to the fire, and her says, 'Now, sit down, Mary, for I can't sit down until you does;' and then her sits down and talks away so pleasant."

"What does she talk to you about?" asked Lovel, with interest.

"Her ask me how I be, and her ask me what I wants, and her talk about the Castle; and then I tells her old tales; her loves to hear about her grandpapa. He was a grand gentleman, Mr. Reginald Mowbray as was. Them were the days, indeed!"

"Has Mr. Mowbray long been dead?" asked Lovel, kindly, as he saw a strong desire on the old woman's part to tell him some tales of the olden time.

"Twenty-two years he been in Beverstone churchyard. He wouldn't lie in the vault, sir; he left it in his will. Oh! he was a grand gentleman; them were the days, indeed. Master Charles, the present Mr. Mowbray, he ben't a bit like his father—not a bit. He be a fine gentleman, too; but Mowbray Castle is a dull place now to what it was—them were the days; then the Mowbrays were the veriest slap up family in the whole country. There was a saying about, sir, that it was like a hotel, such a ringing of bells and such a

prancing of horses, and the finest company as could be got, and twenty-six to dinner day after day, and every luxtury that could be had. Such plate, sir; it's a'most gone now, sir; Master Charles, when he comed into posession, said it was more than any wanted, unless the king himself, but the room was quite in a blaze with it; and such wines, sir. There was a witty gentleman onceset, and he says one day, says he, at dinner, ‘Why, Mowbray,’ says he, ‘this is the Castle of Indulgence itself;’ and then there was such a laugh: so Mr. Simpson telled me, and he said it was the name of some poet; howsomever, I don’t know about that. And then Mr. Mowbray was so particklar, sir—he was a grand gentleman—and so particklar, oh, dear; but we likes it, sir—servants likes it, sir; they likes a master whose got his eyes and looks about him, for if he’s particklar he knows when a thing is well done, and servants likes it—oh, he was particklar—oh, dear.” And the old woman’s reminiscences died away in a sort of whistle.

"Is Miss Mowbray like her grandfather?"

"I think her be a bit; but her be more like her grandmamma, Lady Adelayde Mowbray as was. Her was named after her grandmamma, only that Mr. Charles couldn't abear the name of *Adelayde*, and so he took the half of it, as they said. Oh, her was a fine lady—so tall, and so grand! a bit proud, may be, but her had a good right to be proud, who could count up fifty grandfathers in a minute, as they telled me. Her was proud to be Lady *Adelayde de Vere*; and Miss Ada, her will like to be a lady, too; that her will."

Lovel frowned, though he had no idea of what was coming. The old woman went on.

"I see'd the young lord o' Sunday. I stood beside the door to see ye's all pass; maybe you see'd me—I thinks now that I see'd you, sir, but all my eyes were for the young lord. He's tall, and likely enough; but he doesn't come up to Mr. Reginald Mowbray as was—no, that he doesn't. Howsomer, if Miss Mowbray be pleased, and she be pleased no doubt, that be enough."

Lovel stared at the old woman. Ada and Lord Rochford! He had heard them coupled together, and the words had passed over his ears as the idle wind. He would as soon have thought of joining her name with that of the Great Mogul; yet now suddenly scales seemed to fall from his eyes—light to be shed on many an action—words to acquire a meaning.

He sat speechless, burning with desire to hear more, but withheld by a strong sense of honour from one word of inquiry.

Mrs. Watkyn had paused in her conversation, to rekindle, by the addition of some fagots, the bright blaze of the fire. As she re-seated herself upright in her chair, she renewed her discourse.

“ My lady would have been proud to see her granddaughter a countess. Her would have been sadly vexed at Mr. Charles’s marriage, that her would; but her did not live to see it, and her will not see this one, as I suppose: but if her could, her would draw up her head, and her would smile so sweet, as her

smiled when her was pleased; and so I tell'd Miss Ada to-day. But Miss Ada don't like me to say such things. ‘Don’t talk nonsense, Mary,’ her said—bless her! But I knows her will like to carry a crow’net for all that.”

“Why should she like it?” said Lovel, moodily.

“Why, sir?” cried the old woman, indignantly, for she was somewhat worldly in her views—no strange result of thirty years service in a “slap up” family—“ben’t it a fine thing to be a countess? My lady, Lady Adelayde as was, her would have loved it; and Miss Ada will love it, too. Many’s the time her said to me, when her was a proud little lady, ‘Mary, I means to be a queen.’ ‘That’s impossible, my dear,’ says I; ‘because as I hears tell, the king, though he be a king, musn’t marry no less than a princess; and you ben’t a princess, Miss Ada, though you be’s like one.’ ‘Then, Mary, I will be a duchess,’ says she. And so her will be yet—so her will—for a countess be amost as good,

as they tells me. Countess—what's that young lord's name? I forgets."

"Rochford," said Lovel, shortly.

"Ay, Countess Rochford. It be a grand name, ben't it, sir? My lady would have been proud, indeed. I wonders where the wedding is to be. I hopes it will be in the church here. Lady Adelayde lies in the vault, but Mr. Reginald Mowbray, he wouldn't lie in the vault—he left it in his will. He lies in the churchyard hard by. He was so particklar always. Oh, dear! But you ben't a going, sir?"

"Yes, I must go now," Lovel said, hastily; and almost for the first time in his life, forgetful, through the disturbance of his mind, of the feelings of those beneath him, he walked to the door, and opened it without a word of thanks to his entertainer. His idol was fallen, she was degraded in his eyes; he was sick at heart, disgusted with the world, with Ada, and himself.

The old woman stood curtseying and smoothing her apron. "Well, sir," she said, as no

farewell came, “ I hopes you likes me well enough to give me a call again.”

“ No, I am going away to-morrow, and I shall never come back. Good bye.” His tone might have excited wonder in the least observant mind.

“ That be a pleasant young gentleman,” soliloquized Mrs. Watkyn, as the door closed, and she again took her seat at the fire; “ but them young chaps, they ben’t a bit like the old ones. Mr. Reginald Mowbray, he never would have taken himself off without a pleasant ‘ Thank ye,’ or a bit of a joke, or summut.”

The destruction of that which first excited affection, is not always sufficient to destroy affection itself. I believe, on the contrary, that, except in the case of faults of a mean and revolting kind, the truth of Madame de Staël’s words is perpetually proved—“ *C'est par ses défauts que l'on gouverne ceux dont on est aimé.*”

Certainly, in Lovel’s case, the scorn with which he regarded the action (false, heartless, and degrading although he denominated it)

Ada was about to commit, had little power over the feelings of love and admiration which she had excited; nay, rather in the pity and regret with which he contemplated her misguided ambition, he first discovered how powerful was the hold she had taken upon his heart.

He did not approach her on the evening of that day. His mind was lost and gone in the exciting interest with which he watched for a confirmation of the old woman's tale; but though he did not approach, Ada had no reason to suppose that he had ceased to think of her. Once and again, when at the sound of his voice she had turned her head with involuntary inquiry, she had met his eyes fixed upon her with a look of undefinable interest; and though withdrawn immediately on her observation, she felt, rather than saw, that the gaze returned again.

Late in the evening, he stood for a moment by the fire, within a few steps of the sofa where she sat. Ada was no coquette; yet it must be owned, that having made up her mind to marry Lord Rochford, the interest she took in Lovel

was scarcely justifiable. She now felt that she *must* speak to him. The feeling was too unusual to bear reasoning; it was an impulse; —and feeling the impulse, strange as it was to her to be the first to ask attention, she obeyed it without thought.

She turned her head and raised her eyes, and said quietly, “Do you go to London to-morrow, Mr. Lovel.”

“Yes,” he replied, approaching her, surprised, even startled, at her notice.

“Do you go early?”

“At seven, I believe. I go with Graham and . . . Rochford.” He felt a sudden difficulty in pronouncing the name, and his hesitation betrayed to Ada the mystery which she had desired to penetrate.

She said no more, however—she had acted on an undefinable feeling in addressing him, and she was satisfied.

“We don’t go till twelve,” exclaimed Mrs. Hervey, leaving a chair at a little distance, and seating herself on the sofa by Ada. “Mrs. Mowbray was kind enough to beg us

not to hurry ourselves, and I do so hate going early. I suppose you will be very glad to get rid of us all, Miss Mowbray?"

Ada smiled, but did not answer.

"Vivian always says that he feels like a captive let loose when he sees his last visitor drive away—but I don't believe he does—I think he only says it to tease me, because I like to have the house quite full. Now, will you be honest, Miss Mowbray, and tell me truly what you feel. There is nobody here except Mr. Lovel and me, and I am sure we are both much too goodnatured to be offended—so do tell us, shan't you be very glad when we are gone?"

Ada felt that other ears than Mrs. Hervey's were hanging upon her words; and the consciousness gave a tone to her voice which, perhaps, she might not have wished it to have—and brought to her cheek one of those faint, soft blushes which, perhaps, she would willingly have concealed.

"No, I shall not be glad," she said, without raising her eyes.

"Really! Miss Mowbray—I am so glad to hear it, for I like being here better than anything in the world. It is very kind of you to say so. Don't you feel flattered, Mr. Lovel?" Unsatisfied by a smile of reply, she pertinaciously repeated her inquiry.

"May we take the flattery to ourselves?" he replied, not so lightly but that he asked and perhaps received some answer to his question.

"I like asking you questions, Mr. Lovel," Mrs. Hervey cried, laughing, "you are so very discreet. I think I shall ask you some more."

He laughed and shook his head, and retreated a few steps towards the fire—but he resumed his old place, in a mood of mind far different to that in which he had left it a quarter of an hour before.

As he retreated, Mrs. Mowbray and Lord Rochford suddenly approached, and the weight had scarcely left his mind before it returned with sevenfold power.

Lord Rochford stood before Ada, and said—

"I have got Mrs. Mowbray's leave to make

a request—I hope, Miss Mowbray, you will not refuse, as it is my last night, to play me those charming Welsh airs which I admired so much a few days ago."

His manners were always awkward, but when he allowed them to be natural there was no complaint to be made. Now, however, having, after solemn deliberation, determined on an act of public courtship, he thought it proper to assume a manner of self-important and self-satisfied gallantry which sat upon him with an air that was inexpressibly ludicrous.

The request was insignificant enough, but the tone excited general attention, and others besides Lovel watched Ada with curiosity.

To his intent and penetrating eyes her displeasure was very evident—he saw her lip curl with disdain—he saw the haughty colour mount to her brow. He waited for her reply as if life hung on the words.

No answer immediately came.

His view of her countenance was interrupted. Mrs. Mowbray, who had been turning uneasily

over the books on the table, passed between them—and laid her hand on Ada's shoulder—he saw no more—but cold, calm, and self-possessed, he heard, “I shall be very happy to play;” and a moment afterwards Ada and Lord Rochford went alone to the pianoforte.

Mrs. Hervey crept along the sofa and called to Lovel, with a nod and a smile, “Do you see that, Mr. Lovel? I thought so before, now I am sure.”

She continued to rattle on to his heedless ears. His eyes had followed Ada—his gaze rested upon her as she played—he saw her lovely features kindling with the inspiration of the sweet, though simple airs for which Lord Rochford had asked—he saw her pure and noble beauty, pure as a St. Cecilia herself, and then he turned to him who stood beside her, the companion whom she was about to choose for her life—awkward, stupid, murmuring unmeaning phrases and vapid compliments upon her ear. “They are taking advantage of her ambition to mislead her,” he thought, indignantly; and passionately in

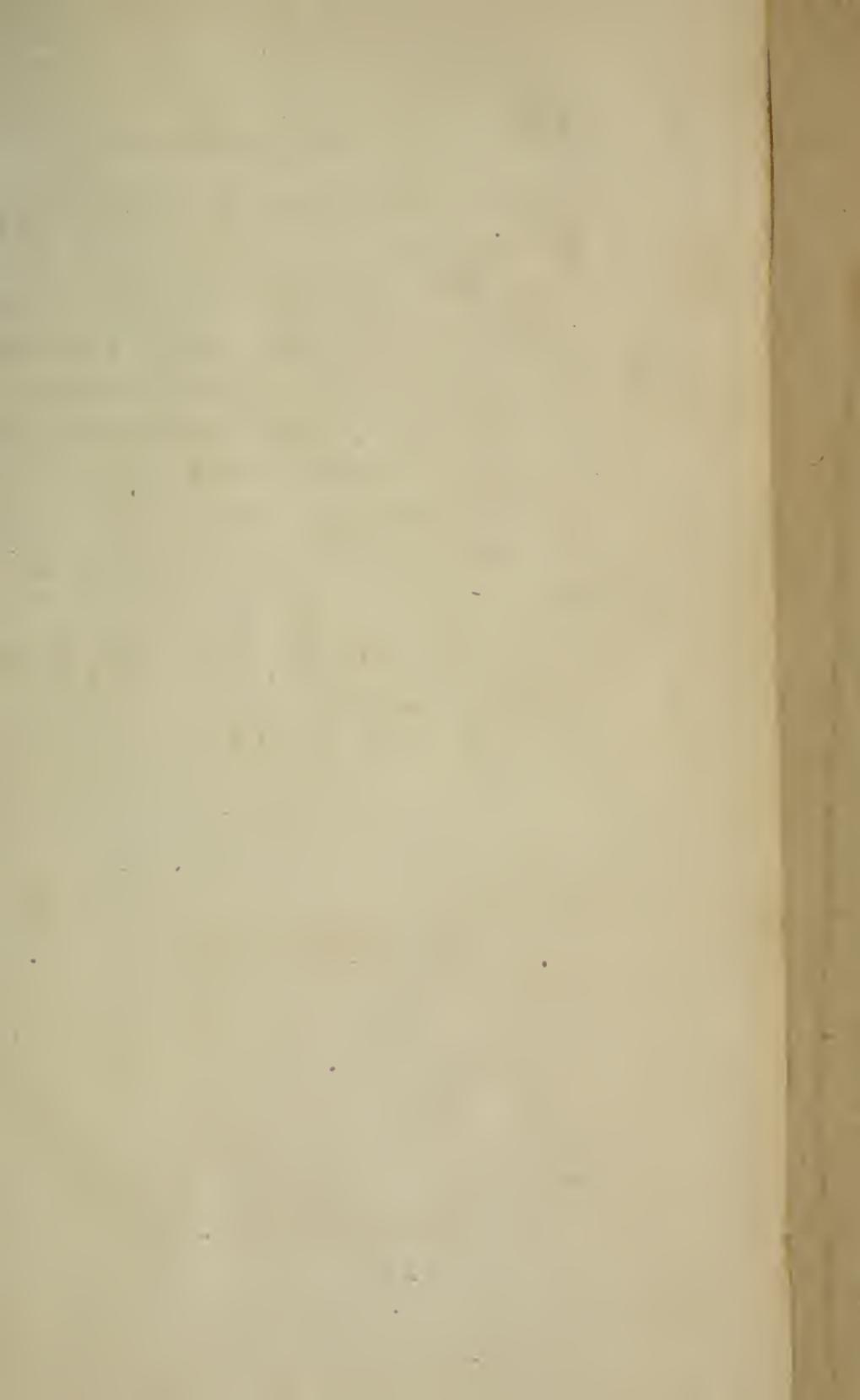
his heart he said that this unholy marriage should not be.

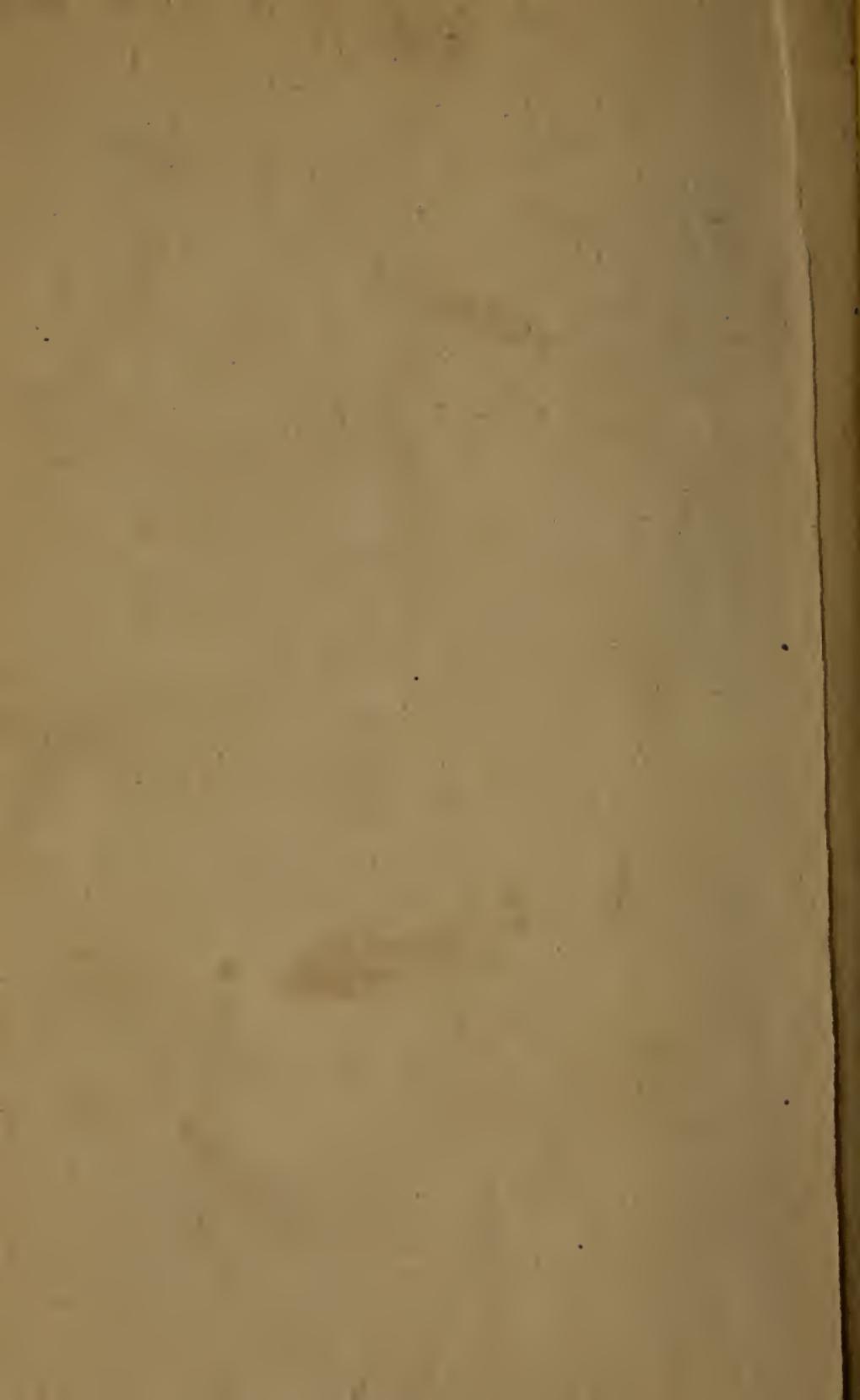
Mr. Mowbray joined him where he stood, and entered into conversation. Lovel talked, and talked bitterly, recklessly, excitedly, and Mr. Mowbray was again enchanted with him.

"We are to have a ball in about a month, Lovel," he said, "on Ada's birthday. I forget the day—can you come down? we shall be happy to see you for a few days."

He should see her again then before all was decided.

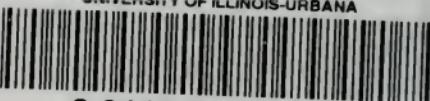
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